

JOHN DEWEY AND MORAL EDUCATION

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Chapter I

Introduction

In the second volume of "Contemporary American Philosophy" are to be found the personal statements of some of the men who have produced that philosophy. Among them is a contribution from the pen of John Dewey entitled "From Absolutism to Experimentalism." In this brief autobiographical sketch of his mental development that, he tells us, has yielded "chameleon-like to many diverse and even incompatible influences," the former professor of philosophy at Columbia University traces the philosophical Odyssey that has led him from Hegelianism to his own brand of Pragmatism which he labeled Instrumentalism or, more recently, Experimentalism.

In his study of the various philosophical systems from Aristotle to the present day, Dewey has been troubled most by the dualism that has characterized them, a dualism which has manifested itself in such pairs of antagonistic ideas as theory and practice, ends and means, body and soul, and so on. But the dualism in logical standpoint and method that separates science from morals has given him special concern. He writes:

I have long felt that the construction of a logic, that is, a method of effective inquiry, which would apply without abrupt breach of continuity to the fields designated by both of these words (science and morals), is at once our needed theoretical solvent and the supply of our greatest practical want. This belief has had much more to do with the development of what I termed, for lack of a better word, "instrumentalism", than have most of the reasons that have been assigned.(1)

Just as his fellow-pragmatist, William James, found the beginnings of metaphysics rooted in ethics, so, too, morality forms the central problem in the philosophy of John Dewey and, for that reason, it is likewise the

(1) "From Absolutism to Experimentalism" in Contemporary American Philosophy, Vol. II, p. 23.

central problem of a large part of his educational writings; for he regards education as the supreme interest about which should focus philosophy with its logical, cosmological and moral problems. In fact, philosophy should not concern itself so much with problems of knowledge as with those of conduct. The question is not whether certain values associated with traditions and institutions have Being; but what judgments we are to form about ends and means in regulating practical behavior.(2) To the statement of William James:

The whole function of philosophy ought to be to find out what definite difference it will make to you and me, at definite instants of our life, if this world-formula or that world-formula be the true one, (3)

Dewey would make the correction:

the chief function of philosophy is not to find out what difference ready-made formulae make, if true, but to arrive at and to clarify their meaning as programs of behavior for modifying the existent world. From this standpoint, the meaning of a world-formula is practical and moral, not merely in the consequences which flow from accepting a certain conceptual content as true, but as regards the content itself. (4)

To guarantee that philosophy will more surely exert this influence on moral conduct, Dewey will have us profit from the advances made in the natural sciences and learn to apply to the moral field the logic of experimentalism. Just as for Peirce and James, pragmatism meant the attempt to apply "the experimental method of reasoning" to philosophy in general, so for Dewey it means the attempt to apply it especially to moral philosophy. The spirit and methods of the laboratory worker are to come to the aid of philosophy and the student of morality is to bring to his task a mind moulded by work in laboratories. This attempt to construct a

(2) The Quest for Certainty, pp. 38 ff.

(3) William James: Pragmatism. A new name for some old ways of thinking, p. 50

(4) Essays in Experimental Logic, p. 312 ff.

logic that can be applied without break of continuity to science and morals is to be based on the scientific method as the only method that has proved fruitful in any subject and "the sole authentic mode of revelation." (5) It sounds very much like Hume who gave to his Treatise on Human Nature the subtitle: "being an attempt to introduce the experimental method of reasoning into Moral Subjects." The endeavor is even more reminiscent of that made in his declining years by Herbert Spencer who wrote in the preface to his "Data of Ethics,"

I am the more anxious to indicate in outline, if I cannot complete, this final work, because the establishment of rules of right conduct on a scientific basis is a pressing need. Now, that moral injunctions are losing the authority given by their supposed sacred origin, the secularization of morals is becoming imperative. (6)

This task that Spencer set himself of finding a scientific basis for morality, Dewey has taken up and he believes he has solved the problem. The key to the solution was come upon through a study of Darwin whom he credits with having made possible, through his principle of transition, the application of experimental logic to mind, life and morals. (7) Convinced that "the ethical import of the doctrine of evolution is enormous," Dewey proposes a scientific morality rooted in human nature and free from the external authority of metaphysics and religion. (8)

This problem of finding a new basis for morality in the sciences has been carried over naturally into his discussions of education. These latter afford a proof, if one were needed, of Dewey's frequent contention that philosophical thought and educational theory are interdependent and that the true philosopher is concerned with the problems of education. John Dewey has developed in his educational writings the same outlook on

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- (5) "What I believe" Article in Forum, March 1930. Cf. Experience and Education, p. 111.
(6) Herbert Spencer: The Data of Ethics, Preface, p. iv.
(7) The Influence of Darwin on Philosophy, p. 8 ff.
(8) Human Nature and Conduct, p. 284

moral theory and the consequent attempt to base moral education on the sciences. Some of his early writings have treated the topic explicitly. His "Ethical Principles Underlying Education" and "Moral Principles in Education" may serve as examples. But besides these, the moral phase of education has claimed his major interest and will be found to furnish the dominant note in many of his other pedagogical works.

The school is always judged by its product and in the past decade some severe criticism has been passed on the out-put of the American public school. The manifest signs of lack of character evidenced by contempt for authority and wide-spread criminality among the young has been an open challenge to the worth of the character training imparted by the school. This has occasioned further discussions on the formation of character as an aim of the school and has led to more studies and investigations in connection with character itself. These studies will be found to deal in large measure with the technique of character education and to leave untouched the more basic elements on which all real character formation must ultimately depend.(9) One of these elements is the philosophy of life that dominates the teachers and administrators in the public school system.

No one familiar with modern education can fail to see the far-reaching influence that John Dewey's philosophy and educational theory have exerted on the public schools of the United States as well as on the theory and practice of education in other lands. Through long years of lecturing and writing he has wielded a deep influence on a large section of the teaching profession in America. This influence has been propagated by the further

(9) For examples of this type of study, cf. Research Bulletins of the National Education Association, Vol. XII, No. 2, March 1934 and Vol. XII, No. 3, May 1934 - Education for Character.

work of such disciples and interpreters as Kilpatrick and Childs. In the writer's opinion, much of that influence has been destructive of any sound basis for moral theory and consequently for moral education which must obviously be built on the first.

The following study is an attempt to make clear the philosophical principles underlying John Dewey's moral theory with special reference to their application in moral education. Once we have realized the false and insecure basis for morality afforded by a philosophy of experimentalism, we can understand the chaotic state of character education in the public school system of this country. (10)

(10) This study was submitted as a doctoral dissertation to the philosophical faculty of the University of Munich in December, 1936.

Chapter II

Dualism in Moral Philosophy

1. Origins of Philosophy.

John Dewey is not the first to think that the traditional European philosophy inherited from Aristotle through the scholastics has suffered shipwreck, but it is doubtful if any philosopher has salvaged as little from the wreckage. He wants to break completely with the past and its weight of custom and tradition which he blames for our lack of progress in logical thinking and social-mindedness. As a direct heir, through New England orthodoxy, of the English Dissenters, he has set himself against all tradition and has tried to replace the old philosophy with a new logic, a new psychology and a new ethics. In doing so, he has, even though he might disclaim it, built for himself a new metaphysics. But before studying his plans for the remaking of philosophy, it will be profitable to study his views on the origin of philosophy as sketched in his two books, The Quest for Certainty and Reconstruction in Philosophy.

In the first of these volumes, Dewey accepts Comte's view of the religious origin of philosophy. Accepting the theory of evolution to account for man's origin and development, he sees primitive man destitute of the elaborate arts of protection which modern science has put in his hands and living a life exposed to all sorts of evil which he could not foresee with any certainty. Life's good and evil happenings could not be traced to causes and were thus beyond the primitive's control. Around them, therefore, there sprang up an air of mystery. What more natural than to invest with a peculiar significance whatever touched the great tragedies or triumphs of life and to count it an omen? The attention we put today on the making of tools to control nature, primitive man spent on omens. His ordinary actions of everyday life

were accompanied by ritual to ensure their success. This atmosphere was his religious disposition and his religion was nothing more than a kind of magic. Early in his history, however, primitive man developed some tools and so acquired the prosaic knowledge of the properties of ordinary things. This knowledge of common objects and verifiable facts had little glamour when set off against his objects of rite and ceremony. These were still looked on with awe and set in a class apart from and above his mundane interests. Here philosophy enters the scene. Reflecting on this distinction in man's knowledge, philosophy gave it formulation and justification; and then took as its own proper domain the realm that religion once had claimed. Besides this, it created for this realm a mode of knowing different from that used in the arts and crafts. There arose then two worlds of human interest, - an inferior one where man could foresee and had arts for controlling its happenings and a superior realm where uncontrollable happenings testified to the existence of supra-mundane powers on whose mercy man depends. This distinction of man's interests into two realms was one source of the dualism that Dewey finds characteristic of classical philosophy. Primitive religion turns as if by magic into philosophy, retaining the religious content but in a new form.

With Euclid's geometry, the clue was found to a logic that could transfer sound opinion into rational discourse. It disclosed a world of ideal forms connected with each other by necessary relations that only reason could trace. This discovery became part of the superior knowledge generalized by philosophy into a doctrine that taught the existence of a realm of fixed Being that formed a complete system of necessary truth. Now the stage is set for Plato and Aristotle who systematized in a rational form the religious and artistic beliefs of Greece. Aristotle identified his metaphysics with theology

and set it higher than the other sciences by reason of the object with which it is occupied, - eternal, self-sufficient Being. The inherited myths of Greek religion are eliminated and in their place the ideals of science and reason are substituted. Conduct is governed no longer by custom but by ends that can justify themselves before reason. These ideals were adopted by the western world and with them came the concept of a dualistic realm, the first a higher realm of fixed reality, where true science is possible, and the second an inferior world of change. Philosophy took as its task the uncovering of the antecedently real rather than the practical knowledge necessary for dealing with the problems of life. To escape from the uncertainty connected with his mortal existence, man is to appeal to reason instead of cult. (1)

In the second volume under review, Reconstruction in Philosophy, Dewey traces the origin of philosophy from its social rather than its religious side. Man is a creature of desire more than of thought. He differs from the brute because he remembers and can preserve his past experiences. From his poetry and drama, he weaves together a web of stories and legends. With time, these are consolidated and some of them occur so frequently as to be socially generalized. In the resulting tradition, we find the norm for individual fancy and the basis of future doctrines. At this point, Dewey inserts the cautious proviso:

I shall ask you to assume with me that in this way the larger cosmogonies and cosmologies of the race as well as the larger ethical traditions have arisen. Whether this is literally so or not, it is not necessary to inquire, much less to demonstrate. It is enough for our purposes that under such social influences there took place a fixing and organizing of doctrines and cults which gave general traits to the imagination and general rules to conduct, and that such a consolidation was a necessary antecedent to the formation of any philosophy as we understand that term.(2)

(1) The Quest for Certainty, Ch. 1 passim

(2) Reconstruction in Philosophy, p. 9

The incentive to embody this conglomeration of feeling and fancy into a logical system and to furnish it with intellectual proof can be supposed to have arisen from the need of reconciling the moral rules and ideals of this traditional code with the existing matter of fact knowledge which grew up gradually in the arts and crafts and from observation of nature. The imaginative body of beliefs connected with the moral habits of the community persisted alongside the everyday knowledge but these two types of mental product were usually kept apart because they were the property of two separate social classes. The religious and poetic beliefs acquired social and political value and were in the keeping of the higher ruling class, while the prosaic workaday knowledge was the possession of the laboring class. Growth, however, in this latter kind of knowledge caused a conflict with the spirit of the traditional beliefs and so gave rise to the Sophistic movement, in which we find the origin of philosophy as the term is understood by the western world.

This conflict of matter of fact method with the traditional religious and moral codes, culminating in the death of Socrates, the protagonist of the scientific method, revealed the need of developing a method of rational investigation and proof which would place the essential elements of traditional belief on a firm footing and at the same time preserve the moral and social values. This basis was to be no longer the customs and habits of the past but the metaphysics of Being and the Universe. From then on, metaphysics becomes for the western world the source and guarantor of higher moral and social values. It was worked out into a rational system by Plato and Aristotle and later renewed and restated by the Christian philosophy of Europe.

Committed thus to the task of reconciling emotionalized belief with prosaic knowledge, philosophy set out with much show of reasoning and proof to put the main elements of belief on a solid foundation and to justify on rational

grounds the spirit, if not the form, of accepted belief. Hence the philosophy of Athens as well as that of medieval Europe and nineteenth century Germany assumed an apologetic character; hence philosophy's desire for certitude instead of resting content with preferring only hypotheses; hence the division of existence into a world of transcendent reality and one of everyday experience. In a word, the great philosophical systems originated not out of intellectual material but from social and emotional material and they have not faced their task with an unprejudiced mind but with party spirit and an element of insincerity.(3)

2. Dualism in philosophy.

The preceding section explains the opposition that Dewey finds in the very beginnings of philosophy between emotion and imagination on the one hand and matter-of-fact knowledge on the other. To this he traces the subsequent dualism that has characterized European philosophy, a dualism that manifests itself in criteriology, ethics, metaphysics and psychology.

Man is ever striving to escape from the peril of uncertainty connected with life and this he can do by taking flight into a world of thought. His practical actions are taken up with unique situations that are not duplicable and so afford him no assurance. The intellect, however, can reach out and grasp universal Being that is immutable and for that reason productive of security. This reaching out to the unchanging by means of thought, philosophers have alleged to be a purely inner activity independent of action and so it comes that the arts by which man attains practical security are despised in comparison with the operations of the mind that give intellectual security. Knowledge and action are thus divided into separate realms and the chief philosophical tradition has held that there is no intrinsic connection between them. Knowledge, in dealing with

(3) Reconstruction in Philosophy, Ch. 1 *passim*

the antecedently real, is supposed to be concerned with a higher form of Being than are the natural sciences.

Conduct, too, finds its values in the antecedently real which provides it with standards. Both for knowledge and conduct, therefore, certainty is sought in cognition which excludes practical activity.

The further distinction made by the Greeks between science as giving complete knowledge and opinion as dealing with changing things still persists; and the underlying premise that only the fixed and unchanging can be real has determined the basic metaphysics of today.

Even the psychological process by which man arrives at knowledge is built on this same doctrine of dualism since knowledge, if it is to be certain, must relate to what has antecedent existence. It must exclude from the act of inquiry every element of practical activity that enters into the construction of the known object. By making what is known antecedent to the mental act of inquiry and unaffected by it, the mind and the organs of knowledge must be taken as existing in the role of a spectator outside the object that it knows. (4)

All these notions about certainty and its relation to the fixed; about the nature of the real world and the way the mind knows it, Dewey holds are related and flow "from the separation (set up in the interest of the quest for absolute certainty) between theory and practice, knowledge and actions." (5)

But more fundamental than this dualism between knowledge and action, between the organs of knowledge and the object known is the dualism that philosophy sets up in existence itself. As Dewey views its history, philosophy, in aiming

(4) The Quest for Certainty, Ch. 1 passim

(5) Ibid, p. 24

to supplant the universality and comprehensiveness of tradition which was social in nature, offered a comprehensiveness that was metaphysical. This it did by creating first a realm of existence corresponding to the religious and supernatural world of popular tradition and calling it ultimate reality. This ultimate reality was to be the sole guarantor of truth in empirical matters and the sole guide for social institutions and individual conduct. The second realm of existence set up by philosophy was that of everyday experience with its practical affairs and utilities. Not only was the world of ultimate reality thus set apart from everyday experience, but, from reflecting in their fine arts on objects that were final and in their industrial arts on those that were instrumental, the Greek philosophers split Being into things that are inherently perfect and those inherently defective.(6) The liberal arts were held in higher esteem than manual arts; pure intellectual inquiry was for Aristotle superior to the social arts. When the philosophy of Aristotle was recast in medieval Scholasticism, this concept was taken over by the Church in making theology, in contrast to natural science, the science par excellence. Christian philosophy with its background of dualism was so deeply ingrained in European culture that, despite man's enormous interest in science and material well-being, he still clings to the formulation of classic philosophy as taken over from the Greeks and modified by Christianity.(7)

The dualism that Dewey finds written so large in the origins of philosophy is accentuated for him by the method that philosophy adopted. It magnified the signs of rigorous thought and made much of demonstration and ultra-scientific argumentation as opposed to the matter-of-fact method of simply producing a fact and pointing to it. Just as the customs dictated by tradition had claimed finality and immutability and were thus presumed to give certain and unvarying laws of conduct, so philosophy, in succeeding to custom, claimed

(6) Reconstruction in Philosophy, ch. 1 passim

(7) The Quest for Certainty, Ch. 4 passim

the same finality and certainty. This has led to philosophy's losing sight of its chief function of freeing men's minds from bias and prejudice and enlarging their perceptions of the world about them.(8)

To classic philosophy with its emphasis on ultimate reality and dialectics, Dewey opposes modern thought with its interest in commonplace knowledge. It assigns to philosophy a social function rather than a quest for absolute knowledge. The practical interests dominating the age are looking for some one to give them coherent intellectual expression. The materialism that would form a part of that formulation has found no genius who could elevate it to the plane of a truly liberal meaning. Any such attempt that might be made to formulate an empirical philosophy today would only be prophetic and point to the day when a future possible experience will provide its own values and meanings instead of looking for them in a transcendent world. With this newer concept of its office, philosophy will no longer be content to stare at absolute things-in-themselves and speculate as to their nature. It will attend to the world of changing things and try to fashion men's lives anew.(9)

When it is acknowledged that under disguise of dealing with ultimate reality, philosophy has been occupied with the precious values embedded in social traditions, that it has sprung from a clash of social ends and from a conflict of inherited institutions with incompatible temporary tendencies, it will be seen that the task of future philosophy is to clarify men's ideas as to the social and moral strifes of their own day.(10)

What philosophy loses from the standpoint of a would-be science with its dealing in ultimate and absolute Reality, it is to gain from the standpoint of humanity in pointing out the way to lead a life of more ordered and intelligent happiness.

(8) Reconstruction in Philosophy, pp. 20, 21

(9) The Quest for Certainty, Ch. 4 passim

(10) Reconstruction in Philosophy, p. 26

3. Dualism in Moral Philosophy.

In the previous section, we have considered the dualism that Dewey has found to be a general characteristic of classical philosophy and which he claims has hampered mankind not only in the abstract study of philosophy but in its application to the concrete problems of life. The effects of this dualism he found not only in metaphysics but in psychology and ethics. Since the present study is restricted to the moral theory of John Dewey, we shall devote this section to the effects of dualism that he finds in this field.

In moral philosophy, dualism results from the separation of morals from human nature, or more specifically, the separation of morals from the scientific study of human nature. With Galileo, dualism was banished from natural science when he turned from the study of eternal, unchanging objects of knowledge to the study of the temporal sequence in nature. The idea of a two-realm scheme of reality, cast aside by natural science, was retained, however, in the domain of morality and religion. The higher realm of eternal, immutable objects of knowledge that had been regarded as the object of true science became the home of those superior values which furnish the norm and end of human destiny; the lower realm of changing things was taken as the sole object of natural science. Although experimental science is occupied to-day in instituting changes with a view to gaining knowledge of nature, the old concept of knowledge as dealing with unchanging reality still endures. With it there persists the notion of moral regulation as derived from properties of this same unchanging reality from which morality is thought to derive eternal values and fixed ideals of conduct.(11)

(11) Cf. The Quest for Certainty, Ch. 4

In thus setting morality in opposition to human nature, professional moralists and theologians have exalted morality and condemned humanity. The human element was looked on as rebellious and for that reason in need of being curbed by the superior morality. This rule of morality over human nature would not have endured if it were not for the controlling oligarchy of parents, priests and others, who imposed their own aims on the young and the layman.

Another and deeper cause for the cleft between morality and human nature was the lack of a scientific knowledge of human nature. With the decline in the social oligarchy that had survived in the feudal state, however, there came a rise in the scientific interest in human nature. Men sought to find in the make-up and working of human forces a basis for moral ideas and ideals.

"Our science of human nature in comparison with physical sciences is rudimentary, and morals which are concerned with the health, efficiency and happiness of a development of human nature are correspondingly elementary."(12)

It is to this separation of morals from human physiology and psychology that Dewey would trace a number of evils. Among these evils is the pathology of goodness with its negative morality and its emphasis on escaping from evil and not doing things; or the development of a spiritual egotism that is taken up with the study of the purity of one's motives and goodness of soul joined to a neglect of the needs of actual conditions or the half-hearted carrying out of one's duties. Aside from these practical evils, he finds a more important result of this separation of morals from human nature in the treatment of the question of free will. This leads to a separation of human nature in its moral aspects from the rest of nature and from the ordinary habits and endeavors of social and business life. People have come to regard these latter as the place for applying moral notions and not for generating them.(13)

(12) Human Nature and Conduct, Introd. p. 3

(13) Ibid, p. 8

From another angle, Dewey finds that dualism in moral theory is fostered by a depreciating attitude toward the natural sciences. These are regarded as materialistic and unworthy of associating with the moral sciences. This attitude side-tracks the moral forces into an unreal self. Disregarding the moral potentialities of physical science, man is not concerned with the interactions of man and nature which must be mastered if freedom is to be a reality. When moral ideas and feelings have been separated in this way from the knowable facts of life, of man and the world, men turn to the unrealities of an inner self and seek guidance in the occult. Morals based on a concern with facts would locate the points of effective effort, thus putting an end to the impossible attempt to live in two unrelated worlds and destroying the fixed distinction between the human and the physical, between moral and industrial and political.

A morals based on study of human nature instead of upon disregard for it would find the facts of man continuous with those of the rest of nature and would thereby ally ethics with physics and biology. It would find the nature and activities of one person coterminous with those of other human beings, and therefore link ethics with the study of history, sociology, law and economics.(14)

Until the integrity of morals with human nature and of both with the environment is recognized, we shall be deprived of the aid of past experience to cope with the most acute and deep problems of life.(15)

Besides this separation of morality from the scientific study of nature, Dewey finds a third important source of the dualism in moral theory arising from the assumption of orthodox psychology that men have separate, individual and independent minds - a view which is opposed to the social psychology which he professes.

The conception of mind as a purely isolated possession of the self is at the very antipodes of the truth. The self achieves mind in the degree in which knowledge of things is incarnate in the life about him; the self is not a separate mind building up knowledge anew on its own account.(16)

(14) Human Nature and Conduct, Intro. p. 12

(15) Ibid, Intro. p. 12

(16) Democracy and Education, p. 344

The traditional psychology of a separate soul, mind or consciousness, he finds to be a reflex of conditions which cut human nature off from its natural objective relations, since it implies severance of man from nature and from his fellow-men and emphasizes this separation in the split of soul and body. Modern philosophy has exaggerated the Ego by thus setting it apart from the physical world and social customs.

Thinkers may start out with a naive assumption of minds connected with separate individuals. But developments soon show the inadequacy of such "minds" to carry the burden of science and objective institutions, like the family and state.(17)

The result of this doctrine of an individual mind has been to make morals a private concern rather than a social interest. This psychological individualism has been fostered by religious and metaphysical interests to the detriment of social-mindedness.

4. Dualism between Instrumental and Final Ends.

On this dualism in moral theory as outlined in the previous section, Dewey blames another philosophical error of dividing ends into intrinsic and instrumental, that is, into those ends that are worth while in themselves and those that are important only as a means to securing some end. This distinction of ends has led to drawing a distinction between ideal goods and material goods and by so doing has separated ideal goods from the mundane interests of everyday life. It does not matter whether these intrinsic goods be labeled religious or esthetic, the effect of their separation from economic ends has been much the same, inasmuch as the ideal interests occupy the upper classes while the economic interests are left to practical-minded people, with the resulting materialism and brutality in economic life. When these economic ends are seen to be as intrinsic and final in their way as any others, it will be recognized that they, too, can and must be idealized,

(17) Experience and Nature, p. 225

if life is to be worth while. At the same time, the esthetic and religious ends that are so thin and meagre when separated from economic ends will be enriched by this union of ideal and instrumental ends.(18)

This separation of ends into instrumental and final is but one phase of the division of ends and means, and if we see that means are intermediate or middle terms, we do away with this dualism between them. In the science of the Greeks, ends were postulated for both man and nature and this view was "foisted by Aristotle upon western culture" where it has clung for two thousand years. Expelled from the realm of science by the intellectual revolt of the seventeenth century, this teleological view should have disappeared from the theory of human action. Man, however, is not logical and holds to old beliefs even when compelled to surrender their logical basis; and so the doctrine of fixed ends-in-themselves at which human acts are or should be directed has persisted in morals.

As far as conduct is concerned, ends in Dewey's philosophy arise and function within action and are not things lying beyond activity at which activity is directed. Ends are not termini of action but are merely terminals of deliberation and so turning points in activity. In surveying the course of a proposed line of action, we distinguish between means and end, but the end is in reality the last act thought of, while the means are the acts to be performed prior to it in time. So it is that the end is merely a series of acts viewed at a remote stage and the means those acts viewed at an earlier stage. Means and ends are, therefore, two names for the same reality. The distinction is subjective and is made when we come to judge about them. "End" is the name for a series of acts taken collectively, e.g. army, while "means" designates the series taken distributively, e.g. this soldier. Ends may

(18) Reconstruction in Philosophy, p. 171

be defined as "ends-in-view, aims, things viewed after deliberation as worthy of attainment and as evocative of effort".(19) An end-in-view is a means in a present action but the present action is not a means to a remote end. This point, Dewey illustrates by the example of a port which is the mariner's objective, but only in the sense of reaching it, not of taking possession of it, for his activity will not cease on reaching the port but only the present direction of his activity will be changed. The port is the beginning of another mode of activity just as it is the termination of the present one. Our so-called "ends" are then in reality only beginnings and it is philosophy which has confused and perverted their nature.

"'Endless ends'" is a way of saying that there are no ends - that is, no fixed self-enclosed finalities."(20)

Truth, for example, has the quality of goodness but it is not an end because it is good; it becomes an end only when because of its goodness it is actively sought for.(21)

In applying this theory of ends to morality, Dewey holds that only when the end is converted into means is it definitely conceived, to say nothing of being executable; hence the first means to be employed is the most important end to discover, and the way to reach an end in the ordinary course of events is to take our minds off the end itself and attend to the action to be performed next, making that the end.(22) The most important consequence of an act is not necessarily its aim, for that may not even be thought of. Yet moralists think that the continuous course of events can be arrested at some particular point, and that men can seize upon some object

(19) Experience and Nature, p. 104

(20) Human Nature and Conduct, cf. Part I. Sect. 2 passim

(21) Experience and Nature, p. 112

(22) Human Nature and Conduct, p. 34

in this unceasing flow of changes and make it their aim without regard for anything else. This fastening upon some single end leads to ignoring the morality of the means used; in any case, there is no such thing as a single all-important end, for an act has more than one effect. The doctrine of fixed ends limits intelligent examination of our actions and their consequences while it puts a pseudo stamp of moral justification on success at any price. But the greatest difficulty with what passes for moral ends and ideals is that they do not get beyond the stage of fancying that something is desirable which is based on an emotional wish, often the wish of some leader coming down through authority. The gains in science, however, have made possible new aims. Knowing how these happen, it is possible to control their happening. In moral matters, however, men neglect to study the way in which results similar to those we want are secured, and this divorce of moral ends from scientific study of natural events renders them mere wishes, while the ends themselves are determined by fixed habit and the force of circumstance. This acceptance of fixed ends is one aspect of man's devotion to an ideal of certainty which was fostered by the old scientific notion that the highest things in nature are at rest and that science deals with forms and species rather than with changes. Behind this conception of fixity in science and morals, there lay the adherence to the certainty of truth and an ignoring of the fact that truth can be bought only by the adventure of experiment, while dogmatism would turn truth into an insurance company and give a certain assurance of safety.(23)

5. Dualism between Moral Motives and Moral Actions.

Another case of the dualism that Dewey finds infecting moral philosophy is that dualism which separates moral motive from moral action.

(23) Human Nature and Conduct, p. 238 ff.

In his "Psychology", which appeared many years ago, Dewey himself divided actions into prudential and moral, the first being measured by their result and the second by their motive. To these latter actions alone, would be ascribed the quality of "moral".

Actions, in short, that are judged from their motives alone are acts lying in the moral sphere.(24)

He argued there that in such acts the doer recognizes his personal responsibility and, if some acts are judged by their motives and the doer holds himself responsible for these motives, it follows that he regards the motives as within his control and that he is responsible for the motive if not for the result. But this view along with others in that same early work would probably strike their more progressive-minded author of to-day as naive. In his more recent work on human conduct, he criticizes moral theories that separate will and deed and by so doing separate a unified action into an inner part called motive and an outer part called act.(25) Now he argues that the motive is not something apart from the act, for it "does not exist prior to an act and produce it. It is an act plus a judgment upon some element of it, the judgment being made in the light of the consequences of the act."(26) Not only are the motive and the moral act inseparable, but the act and the person producing it are also inseparable. When consequences of a moral nature are produced, they enter into the formation of the self and the self enters into them.

A motive is not then a drive to action, or something which moves to doing something. It is the movement of the self as a whole, a movement in which desire is integrated with an object so completely as to be chosen as a compelling end.(27)

(24) Psychology, p. 400

(25) Human Nature and Conduct, p. 43

(26) Ibid, p. 120

(27) Dewey and Tufts: Ethics (rev. edit.) p. 322

It is not too much to say that the key to a correct theory of morality is recognition of the essential unity of the self and its acts, if the latter have any moral significance; while errors in theory arise as soon as the self and acts (and their consequences) are separated from each other, and moral worth is attributed to one more than to the other.(28)

Dewey holds that the whole concept of motive is extra-psychological and comes from man's attempt to influence his own and others' actions. Motives enter in only when there is question of altering the course of an action, but they do not originate the action as such.

In every fundamental sense it is false that a man requires a motive to make him do something.(29)

It is absurd to ask what induces a man to activity generally speaking. He is an active being and that is all there is to be said on that score.(30)

With his tendency to activism which wants to see external results of a tangible nature, Dewey disregards the importance of the inner motive which, after all, has a value in itself, even when for one reason or another the actual placing of the act is impeded.(31) Even though it is the act and not the motive that counts with Dewey, he finds it hard to pass by this question of motive altogether and so is intrigued into giving various explanations of its nature. We shall confine ourselves to only a few of his definitions.

The term "motive" is thus ambiguous. It means (1) those interests which form the core of the self and supply the principles by which conduct is to be understood. It also (2) signifies the object, whether perceived or thought of, which effect an alteration in the direction of activity.(32)

An element in an act viewed as a tendency to produce such and such consequences is a motive.(33)

A motive in short is simply an impulse viewed as a constituent in a habit, a factor in a disposition.(34)

(28) Dewey and Tufts: Ethics (rev. edit.) p. 318

(29) Human Nature and Conduct, p. 118

(30) Ibid, p. 119

(31) Cf. Prantl's criticism on this point. Rudolf Prantl: "Dewey als Pädagoge" 1er Band. P. 615

(32) Dewey & Tufts: Ethics (rev. edit.) p. 321

(33) Human Nature and Conduct, p. 120

(34) Ibid, p. 122

We may readily admit the ambiguity of the term "motive" as Dewey employs it in such arbitrary fashion, for in one case he does not distinguish it clearly from the act itself and in the other case motive is confused with habit or disposition. By avoiding such distinctions, he thinks to banish the dualism between motive and act. This is in line with his main effort in philosophizing, - the breaking down of the traditional distinction between knowing and doing, since the concept of motive would represent for traditional philosophy the part intelligence has to play in moral conduct in proposing reasons for acting or for abstaining from acting. Not wishing to admit this meaning of motive and its need, he holds there is no necessity of proposing motives in order to make a man do something. Instead of motives with which to induce a man to act, what we need is knowledge of what he is going to do and knowledge of the quality of the act in terms of its consequences.

An inchoate activity taken in this forward-looking reference to results, especially results of approbation and condemnation, constitutes a motive.(35)

The unity of character and conduct which have been torn asunder by a division into motive and act can be accounted for by the dynamic force of habit in conjunction with the continuity of habits. Our judgments of motives and consequences are still, through lack of scientific analysis and statistics, rudimentary and conventional; but the problem of moral judgment is to discriminate the complex of acts and habits into tendencies which are to be cultivated or condemned. This brings with it the need of giving more study to the consequences before we can pass judgment with assurance on the good and evil either in the person's disposition or in the result.

We cannot get beyond tendencies, and must perforce content ourselves with judgments of tendency.(36)

Now tendency is a term that means for Dewey the probable effect of a habit

(35) Human Nature and Conduct, P. 121

(36) Ibid., p. 48

in the long run and, while we give heed to that, we must, at the same time, pay attention to the consequences which alone give us instruction as to the meaning of habits and dispositions.

As a practical conclusion from the explanation which regards motive as something not distinct from the act itself and incapable of producing the act, Dewey condemns appeals by teachers and others, when these are thought of as means to originate activity. Such appeals tend to make the self passive, whereas activity ought to be stirred up from within and not merely stimulated from without.⁽³⁷⁾ This view accounts for his disdain of direct moral instruction in the class-room since moral conduct is to be let grow as a natural product out of the occasions offered by the community life within the school.⁽³⁸⁾

Having once set out to discover dualism in moral conduct, Dewey has found it where it may not be altogether obvious to others. He thinks, for instance, that dualism in moral theory asserts itself when it is thought that one must take his choice between sacrificing himself in order to do useful things for others or letting them go undone in order to serve his own exclusive good, whether that be the saving of his own soul or the building up of an inner spiritual life and personality. It might rather have been thought that self-perfecting would seek occasions for the practice of self-sacrifice and that self-sacrifice in turn would be a means to further self-perfection. Dewey seems to find the two mutually exclusive.

What happens is that since neither of these things is persistently possible, we get a compromise and alternation. One tries each course by turns. There is no greater tragedy than that so much of the professedly spiritual and religious thought of the world has emphasized the two ideals of self-sacrifice and spiritual self-perfecting instead of throwing its weight against this dualism of life.⁽³⁹⁾

(37) Dewey and Tufts: Ethics. (rev. edit.) p. 322 ff.

(38) Moral Principles in Education, pp. 3 and 4

(39) Democracy and Education, p. 143

Chapter III

From Dualism to Monism

To solve the problems of intellectual, moral and social life and to counteract the effects of dualism which traditional philosophy has brought into thought and life, Dewey does not propose a comprehensive system of philosophy. That for him is out of date. In any case, such a system would be feasible only on condition that we could arrive at ultimate certainty in our knowledge and, as a pragmatist, he will not admit such a possibility. Lacking certainty, he must be content with philosophical hypotheses and these he has strung together loosely to form a philosophy which is not easily designated by any one name since it includes elements of thought characteristic of the various schools of philosophy to which, at one time or another, he has belonged. Dewey's philosophy might be compared to a mosaic with its many and multiform pieces except for the fact that the variegated pieces in a mosaic go to make a unified pattern. That could never be said of his philosophical fragments which are often poorly matched and incapable of being fitted together in a logical pattern. (2)

The main task John Dewey has set himself in philosophy is to overcome the dualism discussed in the previous chapter. This he regards as the bane of all classical philosophies. If that is once done away with, the classical tradition from Aristotle on is done for. He thinks he can overcome the fundamental error of dualism by showing that in other fields dependable knowledge is secured by surrendering the distinction between knowing and doing. (1) In fact, he regards the discovery of such an empirical logic that unites ideas and experience by means of operations that define those ideas as perhaps his outstanding contribution to philosophical thought.

(1) The Quest for Certainty, p. 79

(2) For examples of contradictory view-points in Dewey's philosophy, cf. Feldman: The Philosophy of John Dewey, e.g. p. 9 ff; p. 19; p. 114ff.

It is not too much to say, therefore, that for the first time there is made possible an empirical theory of ideas free from the burdens imposed alike by sensationalism and a priori rationalism. This accomplishment is, I make bold to say, one of three or four outstanding feats of intellectual history. (3)

1. Dualism and continuity.

As a basis for his new logic, Dewey proposes his theory of continuity which is to abolish the rift between man and nature, between intra-organic and extra-organic events, between mind and body, between experience and nature. With these gaps closed, moral theory will progress in orderly fashion without the hindrances man has encountered through trying to live in the two unrelated worlds of absolute knowledge and practical experience.

Naturalism is a word with all kinds of meanings. But a naturalism which perceives that man with his habits, institutions, desires, thoughts, aspirations, ideals and struggles, is within nature, an integral part of it, has the philosophical foundation and the practical inspiration for effort to employ nature as an ally of human ideals and goods such as no dualism can possibly provide. (4)

This view of man's continuity with nature is built up on a belief in the Darwinian concept of evolution which tries to explain man and his intelligent activity as the culmination of a progressive movement in nature where "nature is seen to be marked by histories, some of which terminate in the existence of human beings and finally in their intelligent activities." (5)

The intelligent activity of man is not something brought to bear upon nature from without; it is nature realizing its own potentialities in behalf of a fuller and richer issue of events. (6)

This idea of an evolutionistic continuity which is to play such an important part in Dewey's development of an experimental logic is also to be found in the teaching of the father of American pragmatism. Charles Peirce writes:

I have begun by showing that tychoism must give birth to an evolutionary cosmology, in which all the regularities of nature and of mind are regarded as products of growth, and to a Schelling-fashioned idealism which holds matter to be mere specialized and partially deadened mind. (7)

(3) The Quest for Certainty, p. 114

(4) Individualism Old and New, p. 153

(5) The Quest for Certainty, p. 247

(6) The Quest for Certainty, p. 247

(7) "The Law of Mind" from the Monist, July, 1892. Reprinted in Peirce: Chance, Love and Logic, p. 202

According to this view, there is no isolated occurrence in nature. Interacting events have tighter and looser ties marking them off from other fields of interaction, but these fields come into conjunction at times and a critical alteration results. Dewey would distinguish three plateaus in nature: 1. the physical with properties that define matter as a general character; 2. life with its differences of animal and plant forms; 3. association, communication, participation with properties that define mind as intellect. He goes on to argue that if one starts with the assumption that mind and matter are two separate things, when evidence forces us to see that they are connected, then the power to make this connection must be attributed to either mind or matter; and the one selected is the cause of the other. But his example of the growth that goes on from childhood to manhood is meant to show the fallacy of dividing something into parts that need to be joined by appeal to a causative power, since the reality is in the growth-process itself.

Substitute for such growth a more extensive history of nature and call it the evolution of mind from matter, and the conclusion is not different. (8)

In this evolutionary growth, Dewey find that "language make the difference between brute and man" for it is discourse that has "changed dumb creatures into thinking and knowing animals". (9) In another place,

all this which marks the difference between bestiality and humanity, between culture and merely physical nature, is because man remembers, preserving and recording his experiences. (10)

As to the difference between living and non-living things, Dewey finds, after rejecting the idea of a soul, that the most obvious difference lies in the fact that the activities of living things are characterized by needs, efforts and satisfactions. The needs imply a condition of tensional distribution of

(8) Experience and Nature, p. 276

(9) Experience and Nature, p. 276

(10) Reconstruction in Philosophy, p. 1

energies such that the body is in a state of unstable equilibrium and by active efforts to satisfy those needs there results a recovery of the equilibrium pattern through changes in the environment due to the interactions with the active demands of the organism. Then by identifying the physical with the inanimate and adding the prefix "psycho", we have the term "psycho-physical" to denote the activity of organism as such, which means here the conjunctive presence in activity of need, effort, satisfaction. This does not mean the mixture of something physical with something psychical but merely the possession of certain qualities and efficacies that are not displayed by inanimate nature. This concept eliminates the problem of how the physical and the psychical are related since we have only to study definite empirical events with their distinctive qualities and efficacies, of which organization is the most important and, when these events occur in a peculiar condition of organization, we have life. As this process goes on, we find mind emerging.

As life is a character of events in a peculiar condition of organization, and "feeling" is a quality of life-forms marked by complexly mobile and discriminating responses, so "mind" is an added property assumed by a feeling creature, when it reaches that organized interaction with other living creatures which is language, communication. (11)

This continuity of man with physical nature vouched for by the doctrine of biological evolution makes his physical and psychical life an organic part of the dynamic, self-evolving Reality in our universe.

The words 'environment', 'medium' denote something more than surroundings which encompass an individual. They denote the specific continuity of the surroundings with his own active tendencies. (12)

In fact, the personal intra-organic events are continuous with the extra-

(11) Experience and Nature, p. 258

(12) Democracy and Education, p. 13

organic in their origin and outcome for they are tentative, experimental anticipations of an object. (13) The distinction of psychical existences from external existences arises only within the technical reflection of the psychologist. (14) The reason is that "mind is not a name for something complete by itself; it is a name for a course of action in so far as that is intelligently directed." (15) So, too, with regard to reflective thought, there is no distinction between the empirical values of unreflective life and the abstract process of rational thought, nor is there a fixed gulf between theory and practical behavior but there is simply a passage from ordinary experience to abstract thinking.

Observation passes into development of hypothesis; deductive methods pass to use in description of the particular; inference passes into action with no sense of difficulty save those found in the particular task in question. The fundamental assumption is continuity in and of experience. (16)

The traditional theories of mind and its organs of knowledge isolated them from continuity with the natural world and made them supernatural or extra-natural and thus introduced into philosophy the problem of mind and body by regarding perception as dependent on the bodily organs and thought as a purely spiritual act.

But now we are aware that the exercise of thought bears the same relation to the brain that perception bears to sense organs, and that there is no separation, structural or functional, between the eye and ear and the central organs. Consequently it is impossible to think of sense as quasi-physical and thought as purely mental, as if the mental meant just the non-material.....But if knowing is one mode of doing, then it, as well as other modes of doing, properly involves bodily instruments. The metaphysical problem of the relation of mind and body is converted into a question, to be solved by observation of facts, of a differentiation of actions into those on a strictly physiological level and those which, because of directed quality and distinctive consequences, are mental. (17)

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- (13) Essays in Experimental Logic, pp. 227, 228
 - (14) Studies in Logical Theory, p. 38
 - (15) Democracy and Education, p. 156
 - (16) Studies in Logical Theory, p. 10
 - (17) The Quest for Certainty, pp. 230, 231

To carry on the thought process, there is no need of a soul or mind different in any way from the bodily structure.

The evidence usually adduced in support of the proposition that lower animals, animals without language, think, turns out, when examined, to be evidence that when men, organisms with power of social discourse, think, they do so with the organs of adaptation used by lower animals, and thus largely repeat in imagination schemes of overt animal action. (18)

When men begin to think, they use some tool at hand just as for hunting or fishing and in this case it is the nervous system and other organic structures and so every thought is rooted in some act of biological behaviour as a function of natural events. By being an organization of physiological affairs, the mind is kept in touch with nature and its ideas are not something had contemplatively and then used but they are something had in and for use. (19) Mind, however, is not a separate kind of Being from matter and life but is something present in a situation when it has the function of meaning something immanently and as a sign of something else.

There is no separate "mind" gifted in and of itself with a faculty of thought; such a conception of thought ends in postulating the mystery of a power outside of nature and yet able to intervene within it. (20)

While both life and mind are properties resulting from a definite state of human organization, yet matter is not the cause of life and mind, for these are the effect of natural events that have matter as a character when they occur at a certain level of interaction.

Nothing but unfamiliarity stands in the way of thinking of both mind and matter as different characters of natural events, in which matter expresses their sequential order, and mind the order of their meanings in their logical connections and dependencies. (21)

(18) Experience and Nature, p. 282

(19) Ibid, p. 285 ff.

(20) The Quest for Certainty, p. 227

(21) Experience and Nature, p. 74

The conclusions that follow from this evolutionary concept of the continuity of man and physical nature are varied. The world that such a theory puts before us is not the closed world with its limited number of fixed forms and classes as pictured by Aristotle and St. Thomas but a universe infinite in space and time and infinitely complex in structure, too multiform to be summed up in one formula. In this universe, change is omnipresent and change rather than the fixity of traditional philosophy is now the measure of reality. The scientist is interested in the laws of motion, generation and consequence for instead of trying to define and delimit something that remains constant amid these changes, he wants a correlation of changes. The same matter and the same laws are to be found everywhere in the universe. With its boundless capacity for expansion, there are no fixed ends. Science is free to observe and make progress. With such a concept of nature there is no limit to what may take place. Such a world does not exist for the realization of some fixed set of ends. It is relatively plastic and can be used for this end or that. (22)

Taking the world as a continuum instead of dividing it into sections is for Dewey a simple solution of the problems connected with cognition. In this adaptation of nature and mind to one another, "the world is subject-matter for knowledge, because mind has developed in that world" and "it is not surprising that mind when it evolves should be mindful of the past and future, and that it should use the structures which are biological adaptations of organism and environment as its own and its only organs." (23) Every mind we know empirically is found in connection

(22) Cf. Reconstruction in Philosophy, p. 60 ff.

(23) Experience and Nature, p. 277

with a body which in turn exists in a natural medium to which it is adapted and from being thus involved in nature, a living organism will know the external world.

Since both the inanimate and the human environment are involved in the functions of life, it is inevitable, if these functions evolve to the point of thinking and if thinking is naturally serial with biological functions that it will have as the material of thought..... the events and connections of this environment. (24)

So it is with all the philosophical problems that men have tried to solve during the past centuries. They are all to find their solution in this doctrine of continuity.

To see the organism in nature, the nervous system in the organism, the brain in the nervous system, the cortex in the brain is the answer to the problems which haunt philosophy. (25)

In the next chapter, we shall consider in detail the effects of this theory of evolutionary continuity on moral theory. Here it will be enough to point out in a general way what Dewey claims could be achieved by subscribing to it. In physical matters, success has come in the line of inventions by a study of connections of various kinds. But the continuity between nature and mind has been disregarded, with the result that the guidance that would come for psycho-physical activity from a recognition of this connection has not been attained. By placing a gap between the Ego and the outside world of things and persons, we fail to solve the problem set by the ambiguous nature of the self which oscillates between surrender to the external and assertion of the internal, one trait tending to continuity and the other to isolation. So it comes that we can accept the world as we find it and become parasites or set out to remake conditions according to our desires and then we have intelligence and efficiency as the result. (26)

(24) Ibid, p. 279

(25) Ibid, p. 295

(26) Cf. Experience and Nature, p. 244 ff.

This moral control, Dewey maintains, would be simplified by admitting the principle of continuity for, in the continuous flow of events which makes up the world, some are characterized by "matter" when they take place at a definite level of interaction. Matter would not be for him, therefore, a kind of Being different from life and mind; but these latter are simply caused by such natural events as have matter as a characteristic. Now to control such complex events as life, thought and feeling, we are to analyze them into their more simple elements and in every instance come upon matter or some physical event as the fundamental means of direction and control.

Thus it is in virtue of the character of events which is termed matter that psycho-physical and intellectual affairs can be differentially determined. Every discovery of concrete dependence of life and mind upon physical events is therefore an addition to our resources. If life had no mechanism, education, deliberate modification, rectification, prevention and constructive control would be impossible. (27)

It is through this mechanical control of nature that Dewey hopes to see morality improved for "the mechanization of nature is the condition of a practical and progressive idealism in action." (28) When nature is no longer regarded as the slave of metaphysical and theological purpose but is subdued to human purpose, man is to gain through science control over nature, and, by so doing, can frame new purposes for his activity.

2. Dualism and experience.

Closely allied with Dewey's concept of continuity between man and nature is his theory of experience which is to be the second main factor in overcoming the dualism of traditional philosophy and in providing a new basis for morality. His view of the nature of experience is one of the most

(27) Ibid, p. 263

(28) Reconstruction in Philosophy, p. 72

radical elements in Dewey's whole system and he comments on the importance of understanding it in the Introduction to his Essays in Experimental Logic where he remarks that the key to understanding the doctrine of the essays lies precisely in the passages regarding the temporal development of experience. The relation of this concept of experience to his philosophy is summed up as follows in the Introduction to his Studies in Logical Theory.

Judgment is the central function of knowing and so the central problem of logic. Since the act of knowing is connected with the diverse functions of affection, appreciation and practice, knowing is not a self-enclosed whole. Since knowledge appears as a function within experience and passes judgment on the processes and contents of other functions, its aim must be reconstructive or transformatory. Since reality must be defined in terms of experience, judgment appears as the medium through which the consciously effected evolution of Reality goes on. There is no reasonable standard of truth except on the postulate that Reality is self-evolving and except through reference to the specific offices which knowing is called on to perform in readjusting and expanding the means and ends of life.

Dewey holds that "this conception gives the only promising basis upon which the working methods of science, and the proper demands of the moral life, may cooperate". (29) Starting from this conviction, he tries to show that terms like thinking and reflection denote inquiries or results of inquiry, and that this inquiry has an intermediate place in the development of experience. With this interaction of experience and mental processes, experience is to be taken as the source of thought and the work of thought

(29) Studies in Logical Theory. Preface, p. X.

consists "in harmonizing the various portions of experience with each other".(30)
When philosophy is taken as a logic of experience, "its business is not to secure or guarantee any particular reality or value." Its task is rather to adjust experience within the various departments of life. (31)

The justification for this concept of experience and its relation to reason, Dewey finds first in the change in the actual nature of experience together with its changed content and methods resulting from the increase in scientific knowledge; and secondly in the development of a "psychology based upon biology which makes possible a new scientific formulation of the nature of experience." (32) In the biological explanation of the continuous and active adaptation of living things to their environment is to be found the explanation of how man makes his experience. This interaction of organism and environment is the primary fact and the basic category with which philosophy must reckon.

What then is the meaning that Dewey attaches to this concept of experience? We may answer that question in part by pointing out what he does not consider it to be.

1. Experience is not to be identified with the reception of sensations which are not to be taken as a form of knowledge but as incitements to an act of inquiry which is going to terminate in knowledge or as stimuli to reflection and inference and as registers of motor activity expended in doing things. We are not to take experience as being a succession of personal sensations, images and feelings. Love and hate are not just states of mind but are active performances to and about other things. Experience is then a broader and deeper account off the world, something more

(30) Studies in Logical Theory, p. 85

(31) Ibid, p. 19

(32) Reconstruction in Philosophy, p. 84

like history, including within its range objective conditions as well as the human record and estimate of them. (33)

2. Experience is not the same as knowledge in the traditional meaning of the word for we can deal with objects in other ways than simply knowing them. Being and having things in other ways than by merely knowing them are also possibilities - being wise, for instance, or having money - and are preconditions of reflection and knowledge. The existence of such things is unique for they can only be had and then pointed to in reflection. But philosophy has always stressed the knowing side of this process and this bias has made it impossible to distinguish between being or having things and knowing them. In fact, knowledge itself is a form of experiencing, something to be had and enacted before it can be known, and the having of this experience is not identical with knowing it. Thus sense knowledge and inferential knowledge are not two kinds of knowledge but simply two dimensions of experienced things, namely, having and knowing them. The epistemological problem resolves itself into finding out what one ought to know about objects in order to secure them, rectify them or avoid them. In short, knowing is the same as having. (34)

3. Experience is not identical with consciousness, for it is broader than consciousness which is only a small and shifting part of it. Besides, ignorance is also one of the chief features of experience. Consciousness, like cognition, is not a knowing but a having and, when treated as knowing, it is not natural but is suborned in the interests of metaphysics. (35)

(33) Cf. The Quest for Certainty, p. 156 and Experience and Nature, p. 25 ff.

(34) Cf. Experience and Nature, p. 18 ff.

(35) Cf. Experience and Nature, Ch. 1 passim, esp. pp. 7 and 29

4. Experience is not purely subjective nor is it always the possession of some definite person. The question usually asked in this connection, "Whose experience?", has no point but implies that experience by its very nature is owned by some one and so acquires a private and exclusive quality. Because houses, for instance, are owned by some one, it does not follow that the possessive reference so permeates the properties of being a house that nothing intelligible can be said about it without including this note of ownership. There are other things true of a house besides some one's owning it. It is made of brick or is taxable, for example. The case is the same with experience which has the same dependence on objective natural events, physical and social, as the occurrence of a house. Experience has its own objective traits that can be described without reference to a self, just as the house is made of brick, regardless of who happens to own it. In fact, we ourselves are not something apart but are caught up the onrushing stream of events that we call experience.

Experience, a serial course of affairs with their own characteristic properties and relationships, occurs, happens, and is what it is. Among and within these occurrences, not outside of them nor underlying them, are those events which are denominated selves. (36)

This self, then, which does not exist until we recognize it in this process of experiencing, assumes the care of certain objects and acts that occur in experience. This assumption of ownership, just as in the case of owning a house, brings further liabilities and assets. We make this claim to ownership of a piece of experience when we say "I think, I desire, etc." rather than say "It is thought, it is desired, etc.", although such a statement of ownership by no means implies that the self is the author of the thought or

the desire nor its exclusive seat. It means that the self as a centered organization of energies identifies itself with a thought or sentiment arising outside itself in the sense that it accepts their consequences. Natural events, including social habits, generate thoughts and feelings and to say "I think" means that, instead of giving credit to or laying blame for the thought on nature, one's family, church, etc., I declare myself a partner in it and am prepared to accept the benefit or incur the liability arising from it. Not all thoughts and emotions are owned either socially or personally and their appropriation has to be justified on the basis of distinctive consequences. It is a false psychology which has stressed the idea of belonging with regard to experience and by so doing separated it from the world of natural events that form the matter for study in the natural sciences. (37)

So far, we have seen what Dewey does not consider experience to be. It is not equivalent to sensation, knowledge, consciousness, nor is it something purely subjective.

Positively, experience is described by Dewey as a reminder of "something which is neither exclusive and isolated subject or object, matter or mind, nor yet one plus the other". (38) Again it

is not a combination of mind and world, subject and object, method and subject matter, but is a single continuous interaction of a great diversity (literally countless in number) of energies. (39)

From an example he uses, we may better understand his meaning of the term. Seated at a typewriter, I find the word I have just written momentarily focal and around it shade off into vagueness the typewriter, the room, the building, the campus, etc. In the experience, are all the physical features

(37) Cf. Ibid, p. 231 ff.

(38) Experience and Nature, p. 28

(39) Democracy and Education, p. 196

of the environment extending out into space and all the habits and interests extending backward and forward of the one using the typewriter. Such an immense and operative world of interacting elements is included in the concept of experience. (40)

The extent of experience is not limited to the present alone but implicates future forces and potential consequences as well. From the part death has played, for example, by anticipation in the lives of men, we would need to include death among the data of experience. In short, experience includes everything in the universe - what we live, enjoy, suffer, think, and are ignorant of - all are included and we begin not with the simple elements of experience but with the complex whole from which we make analyses and deductions. Experience includes rational thought as well as the sense data of natural science and these two types of experience differ only in the fact that one is concerned with regulated and directed change, the other with uncontrolled change. Knowledge is a mode of experiencing things which facilitates control of objects for purposes of non-cognitive experiences. (41) Experience is, however, primarily an affair of doing rather than of knowing, an active-passive affair which "involves a connection of doing or trying with something which is undergone in consequence". (42)

A separation of the active doing phase from the passive undergoing phase destroys the vital meaning of an experience. (43)

When a child, for instance, puts his hand into the fire, the act is aimless but as a result of his action, the child suffers pain and the reaching of his hand into the flame and the burning are connected and come to suggest

(40) Essays in Experimental Logic, p. 6

(41) Cf. The Quest for Certainty, p. 83

(42) Democracy and Education, p. 177

(43) Ibid.

and mean the other. In this case, there is vital and significant experience.(44)

Summing up,

the true "stuff" of experience is recognized to be adaptive courses of action, habits, active functions, connections of doing and undergoing; sensori-motor co-ordinations. (45)

Not from sense data or logical principles as in dualistic philosophy but from some meaning which is a deposit of an earlier experience, either personal or social, does Dewey trace all knowing or attempts to know. it is the dualistic tradition which makes men call thinking "mental" but thought is only partial experimentation confined within the organism. This separation, however, of thought from the world of experience was used as evidence of an immaterial reason independent of and superior to the body. (46) But when experience is aligned with the life-process and when sensations are seen to be merely points of readjustment, the alleged atomism of sensations disappears and with it there vanishes the need of any synthetic faculty of super-empirical reason to connect them.

Experience carries principles of connection and organization within itself. These principles are none the worse because they are vital and practical rather than epistemological. (47)

The coping up of thought within the mind stripped overt action in the outer world of its full meaning but when outer and inner activity came together in a single experimental operation, which is used as the only adequate method of discovery and proof, then effective criticism and consistent valuation emerged. (48)

From all this, it is clear how basic to Dewey's psychology must be the concept of experience. He takes psychology as the "natural history

(44) Reconstruction in Philosophy, p. 86

(45) Ibid, p. 91

(46) Cf. Experience and Nature, p. 428

(47) Reconstruction in Philosophy, p. 91

(48) Cf. Experience and Nature, p. 428

of the various attitudes and structures through which experiencing passes. (49) The joining up of the life-process with experience does away with the need of a super-empirical reason; experience is the source of our thinking; thinking is a method of reconstructing experience and is to lead to the development of new experience; knowledge is a function within experience and experience is a substitute for direct knowledge.

Important as the idea of experience is for understanding Dewey's psychology, it is still more important for his moral theory. He finds the moral process a continuous passage of experience from worse to better, and this experience is to be our guide in moral matters as well as the source of the ultimate criterion of values. In one place, he attempts to "show how and why it is now possible to make claims for experience as a guide in science and moral life which the older empiricists did not and could not make for it." (50) In another place, he points out that it is only an unimaginative conception of experience which has given strength to the "appeal to fixed principles transcending experience, to dogmas incapable of experimental verification" and to the "reliance upon a priori canons of truth and standards of morals in opposition to dependence upon fruits and consequences in experience." (51) Formerly men used past experience to form customs to be followed blindly or to be blindly broken, but now former experience is used to suggest new aims and methods for developing an improved experience and so it becomes constructively self-regulative. By using past experience to construct a better future one, experience includes the process

(49) *Studies in Logical Theory*, p. 15

(50) *Reconstruction in Philosophy*, p. 78

(51) *Ibid*, p. 101

by which it directs itself in its own betterment and this goes on independently of reason as a faculty apart from experience.

Concrete suggestions arising from past experiences, developed and matured in the light of the needs and deficiencies of the present, employed as aims and methods of specific reconstruction, and tested by success or failure in accomplishing this task of readjustment, suffice. To such empirical suggestions used in constructive fashion for new ends the name intelligence is given. (52)

Reason is for Dewey nothing more than "experimental intelligence" conceived after the pattern of science and used in the creation of social arts. It projects a better future. Its plans, however, and the principles proposed as guides in this reconstructive process are not dogmas but hypotheses to be worked out in practice and to be rejected, corrected and expanded as they fail or succeed in giving our present experience the guidance it needs. This experimental intelligence is in constant process of formation and its retention requires constant alertness in noting consequences and an open-minded will to learn and the courage to readjust. (53) As for the ideas themselves, the test of their validity is their use in effecting a transition from a relatively conflicting experience to a relatively integrated one. They have no validity as isolated or static, but only as they are of use in determining the further movement of experience. (54)

Experience has not, however, been adopted as a guide by moral theorists. By thus neglecting to use the tools which physics, physiology and economics have put in their hands, these theorists have not tried to discover the conditions, consequences and relations of goods admitted to be goods not because of theory but because they are found to be so in experience. In disregarding the ability of everyday experience to develop its own methods

(52) Ibid, p. 95

(53) Reconstruction in Philosophy, p. 96

(54) Studies in Logical Theory, p. 75

and to furnish its own goals and ideals from within itself, the transcendental philosopher claims a private access to truth and so ignores the guidance that could come from things of common experience. (55) This refusal to recognize the subject-matter of the natural sciences as a part of morals has made the latter a subject apart and has assigned it to a realm of existence apart from experience. This accounts for the lack of agreement in moral theories.

Knowledge criticizes an accepted belief with a view to revising it, and we might expect ethics to follow the same procedure with respect to values. But there has been opposition to the use of the scientific method in this case because of the preconception that ethics is concerned with ends rather than with the criticism of ends. It has assumed as its traditional task the discovering and defining of the "summum bonum" about which there has been so far no agreement. While the denial of such a function to ethics may seem to be the denial of the possibility of moral philosophy, yet in other cases, when no solution has been reached, it is taken as evidence that we are on the wrong track. By being thus connected with unchanging ends, moral teachings have been made into unyielding dogmatic doctrines instead of being left flexible and adaptable to ever changing experience. (56) But when the logic of experience is applied to moral theory the result will be that

principles and alleged truths are judged more and more by criteria of their origin in experience and their consequences of weal and woe in experience, and less by criteria of sublime origin from beyond everyday experience and independent of fruits in experience. It is no longer enough for a principle to be elevated, noble, universal and hallowed by time. It must present its birth certificate, it must show under just what conditions of human experience it was generated, and it must justify itself by its works, present and potential. Such is the inner meaning of the modern appeal to experience as an ultimate criterion of value and validity. (57)

This change in the norm for moral values from the transcendental to everyday experience, Dewey takes to be in line with the changes resulting

(55) Experience and Nature, p. 38

(56) Experience and Nature, p. 431 ff.

(57) Reconstruction in Philosophy, p. 48

from a transfer of man's interest in another world to this present one, from the supernaturalism of the Middle Ages to the present day delight in natural science. With this movement came the decay of the authority of fixed institutions and a growing belief in the power of the individual mind to attain truth and guide life by the methods of natural science. Man does not look to the past for guidance but to the future and he hopes to alter his destiny by the experimental study of nature that will fructify into inventions with which to turn the forces of nature to social uses and so to moral benefit. What is true of intellectual truths, for which the criterion is to be in experience, is equally true of moral truths. But while empirical knowledge has grown with the advance in scientific studies and the new method has found application in the fields of chemistry, physics and biology, it has yet to be applied to moral science.

Education and morals will begin to find themselves on the same road of advance that say chemical industry and medicine have found for themselves when they too learn fully the lesson of wholehearted and unremitting attention to means and conditions, - that is, to what mankind so long despised as material and mechanical. (58)

The procedure of natural science has shown how it is possible for experience in becoming really experimental to develop its own ideas and standards and the progress in the knowledge of nature has become steady only through this transformation. Because philosophy has held back from applying this norm of experience to judge conduct, Dewey can only regard himself as a prophet of what might happen when a new empirical philosophy adopts the method of natural science as the one most subject to intellectual control. But he maintains that

the selection of this field of fact rather than some other as that from which to project a hypothesis regarding a future possible experience in

which experience will itself provide the values, meanings and standards now sought in some transcendent world, has both theoretical and practical justification. (59)

Moral theories have dreaded the change coming with this new method of experimental knowing and, failing to seek ideals in actual experience, we have "a lack and uncertainty that account for the continued hold of traditional philosophical and religious notions which are not consonant with the main tenor of modern life." (60) But when dependable knowledge can be secured without a separation of knowing from doing, the reasons disappear for setting up some objects as fixed and outside human experience in opposition to objects in the world. Experimental science does not look to the changeless for its knowledge but institutes changes in order to see what other changes occur and the "correlation between these changes, when measured by a series of operations, constitutes the definite and desired object of knowledge." (61) Traditional metaphysics, in yielding to the modern scientific revolution, retained the old concept of knowledge as related to antecedent reality and of moral regulation as derived from the properties of this reality, despite the fact that the application of natural science through inventions and technologies is "the finally controlling and characteristic fact of modern life." (62) The solution of the problems of moral conduct calls then for a wholehearted adoption of the experimental method.

The general logic of experience can alone do for the region of social values and aims what the natural sciences after centuries of struggle are doing for activity in the physical realm. (63)

Since moral values and social values are the same for Dewey, it is clear that his hopes for progress in moral science are bound up with the

(59) The Quest for Certainty, p. 78

(60) Ibid, p. 107

(61) Ibid, p. 84

(62) Ibid, p. 79

(63) Studies in Logical Theory, p. 20

adoption of the experimental method of the natural sciences. Moral conduct takes place in a setting that is social, physical and biological. Hence the physical and biological sciences play a part in ethical science, for the postulate of moral science is the continuity of the scientific judgment. In a conscious life that is continuous, experience of one type may help to form any other type including ethical experience.

And this possibility of use, of application, of instrumental service, makes it possible and necessary to employ materialistic science in the construction of ethical theory, and also protects in this application ethical values from deterioration and dissolution. (64)

The whole discussion implies that the determination of objects as objects, even when involving no conscious reference whatever to conduct, is, after all, for the sake of the development of further experience. This further development is change, transformation of existing experience, and this is active. So far as this development is intentionally directed through the construction of objects as objects, there is not only active experience, but regulated activity, i.e. conduct, behaviour, practice. Therefore, all determination of objects as objects has reference to change of experience, or experience as activity; and, when this reference passes from abstraction to application, has reference to conscious control of the nature of the change.....and thereby gets ethical significance. This principle may be termed the postulate of continuity of experience. (65)

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- (64) Logical Conditions of a Scientific Treatment of Morality.
From the Decennial Publications of the University of Chicago.
First Series, Vol. III. p. 137
- (65) Ibid, p. 139

CHAPTER IV
Moral Theory

Having assumed that man is continuous with the rest of nature, Dewey drew the conclusion that his intellectual, physical and moral life are not to be divided off sharply from one another but are all phases of that continuity which is characteristic of visible reality. Now this reality is to be defined in terms of experience, which is itself joined to the life process and is to be, in place of a super-empirical reason, the criterion of truth and our guide in moral life. With these two basic ideas imbedded in a variegated philosophical groundwork of pragmatic instrumentalism, socialistic naturalism and idealistic empiricism, Dewey has constructed an ethical theory. This he hopes will meet the needs of the present day by supplying scientific foundations for a morality that will be untrammelled by the sanctions of religion or by faith in the supernatural. This secular morality must seek out new sources, new norms, new sanctions. For its sources, it will turn to all the moral codes of the past, without insisting dogmatically on any one of them, to history, to politics, to education and above all to the natural sciences. (1) The norms are to be found in the continuous growth of experience. (2) The sanctions are to be the consent of our fellow-men.(3)

1. Definition of moral science.

When Dewey comes to define moral theory, he takes it as a "critical judgment upon conduct" and a "systematic judgment of value," "not systematic

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- (1) Dewey and Tufts: Ethics, (rev. edit.) p. 190 ff.
(2) The Quest for Certainty, p. 78
(3) Influence of Darwin on Philosophy, p. 75

in the sense that it simply catalogues previous judgments, but in the sense that it attempts to reconstruct them on the basis of a deeper principle." (4)

Such a moral theory is to be taken up with the

study of the conditions out of which come the obstacles and the resources of adequate life, and developing and testing the ideas that, as working hypotheses, may be used to diminish the causes of evil and to buttress and expand the sources of good. (5)

Admitting the vagueness of such an approach, he contends that

there is no separate body of moral rules; no separate system of motive powers; no separate subject-matter of moral knowledge, and hence no such thing as an isolated ethical science. (6)

Ethics then is not to be regarded as a science that provides a set of rules for conduct, but one that supplies principles. These principles, however, are not norms but experimental methods of action.

The principle is not what justifies an activity, for the principle is but another name for the continuity of the activity. (7)

In as far as one needs rules for his conduct, he is only imperfectly moral since he does not perform his actions from full personal preference; in as far as he understands and is personally interested in the acts demanded, he needs no rules.

The heart of the moral life lies in the free personal determination of right and wrong. No set of rules can take the place of this personal determination without destroying the vital spring of morals. (8)

As regards moral rule Dewey maintains that

it is a piece of scholasticism to suppose that a moral rule has its own self-defining and self-applying content. What truth-telling, what honesty, what patience, what self-respect are, changes with every change of intelligence, with every added insight into the relations of men and things. (9)

(4) The Study of Ethics. A Syllabus, p. 1

(5) Influence of Darwin on Philosophy, p.68

(6) Ibid, p. 69

(7) Democracy and Education, p. 410

(8) Psychology, p. 346

(9) "Moral Theory and Practice" in the International Journal of Ethics, Vol. 1, pp. 186-203. Reprinted in Ratner: The Philosophy of John Dewey, p. 317

Ethical theory, therefore, is not to be defined from the standpoint of rules, for it is not a judgment about conduct nor is it something apart from conduct. It is instead "a more conscious and more generalized phase of conduct"(10) or, as he defines it in another place,

the analytic perception of the conditions and relations in hand in a given act, - it is the action in idea. It is the construction of the act in thought against its outward construction. It is, therefore, the doing - the act itself in its emerging.(11)

Our every conscious act constitutes a judgment of value since it is performed because we think it worth while. It is in the acts themselves that one's theory of conduct is revealed and its value tested.(12)

With moral principles and moral activity all one piece, moral theory is not to be regarded as something objective. It is rather the result of personal reflection, and that cannot occur when there is positive belief as to what is right and wrong.

For what is called moral theory is but a more conscious and systematic raising of the question which occupies the mind of any one who in the face of moral conflict and doubt seeks a way out through reflection.(13)

This reflective morality is not to be the source of definite rules or injunctions as in the old-fashioned moral codes. It is to shift the emphasis from conformity to prevailing modes of action over to personal disposition and personal attitudes. The reason for this change of emphasis is that moral science is to be regarded as still in the making and not a mere cataloguing of values already established. It is something growing and evolving, dynamic and progressive.

(10) The Study of Ethics. A Syllabus, p. 2

(11) Moral Theory and Practice. Op. cit., p. 310

(12) The Study of Ethics, Ch. I passim.

(13) Dewey and Tufts: Ethics (rev. edit.) p. 173

Instead of regarding its standards as laws established once for all by a divine authority, morality seeks to reach principles. Instead of embodying its ideals in persons, the moral seeks to reshape them continually.(14)

In his view of human conduct, Dewey divides it off into three levels:- the first, where behaviour is motivated by non-moral impulses or needs; the second, where man accepts with little reflection the standards of his group; the third, where he judges for himself. The first of these levels, he would not call moral; the second shows morality in the making; the third alone is moral. The whole process is one "in which man becomes more rational, more social, and finally more moral."(15) But this final stage is itself only a relative point in man's moral growth, and so moral science must be ready to grow along with a progressing morality. Relativity in moral standards is to take the place of the cult of fixed principles which is for Dewey another manifestation of man's longing for certainty in a world where he must learn to be content with hypotheses. Moralists have thought that chaos would result from this lack of fixed principles for conduct, but new situations arise and challenge intelligence to produce new principles. With life moving forward in a changing world, old moral principles cease to apply and so men must be satisfied with relative certainty in moral questions which the adherence to fixed truths prevents us from attaining. The alternative to fixed moral principles is continuity in growth.(16)

When we observe that moralisathome wherever considerations of the worse and better are involved, we are committed to noting that morality is a continuing process not a fixed achievement. Morals means growth of conduct in meaning; at least it means that kind of expansion in meaning which is consequent upon observations of the conditions and outcome of conduct. It is all one with growing.(17)

(14) Dewey and Tufts: Ethics. (1908 edit.) p. 198

(15) Ibid, p. 10

(16) Human Nature and Conduct, Part III, Sect. 7 passim

(17) Ibid, p. 280

2. Scope of moral science.

The extent of moral theory, according to Dewey, is to be broad enough to include all of our activity into which alternative possibilities enter, since with these there arises a difference between better and worse. While only deliberate action with reflective choice is to be called distinctively moral, yet conduct covers every act which is judged with reference to better and worse.

Potentially conduct is one hundred per cent of our acts. Hence we must decline to admit theories which identify morals with the purification of motives, edifying character, pursuing remote and elusive perfection, obeying supernatural command, acknowledging the authority of duty.(18)

Dewey would not have us set aside some special part of life and label it 'moral' but ethical principles are to be brought down to earth from their transcendental realm and expressed in social and psychological terms. This means that the 'moral' will be translated into the conditions and forces of community life and into the impulses and habits of the individual. It means that "we recognize that moral principles are real in the same sense in which other forces are real; that they are inherent in community life, and in the working structure of the individual."(19) Regard for such remote goods as perfection and salvation is to be considered as distracting attention from the good of the present action, which is the only good within our control and so the only one for which we are responsible. This present activity, however, is not to be taken in too narrow a sense, for the present with all its habits and impulses is something complex, and we are to move on through this maze from the worse into the better. The better, in this case, is not to be determined by comparison with something lying outside of the continuous present but with something within it. Each situation in which

(18) Human Nature and Conduct, p. 279

(19) Moral Principles in Education, p. 58

we are thrown has its own measure of progress, and we must be content to travel toward some relative good that it holds, instead of trying to arrive at some good beyond it. To look for a goal for our activity in some infinite ideal is only to breed despair in finite man.

Instruction in what to do next can never come from an infinite goal, which for us is bound to be empty. It can be derived only from study of deficiencies, irregularities and possibilities of the actual situation.(20)

We are to be carried along with our attention fastened on the present activity and with no thought of a future goal.

Positive attainment, actual enrichment of meaning and powers opens new vistas and sets new tasks, creates new aims and stimulates new efforts.(21)

3. Method of moral science.

In bringing moral theory out of the realm of the metaphysical down to earth, Dewey puts it alongside the empirical sciences and argues that it ought to follow the same methods. When man is taken as a product of material evolution with nothing to distinguish him essentially from the rest of nature, everything that concerns him would fall within the sphere of the natural sciences. Denying a spiritual soul as the formative and directive element in the human composite, Dewey has to explain the intellectual and volitional activity of man as purely material occurrences. Moral conduct, too, is not to be accounted for as dependent on a spiritual faculty, conscience, but as the result of the physical interaction of man with his social and natural environment. Being concerned with human conduct, moral theory is to grow out of specific empirical facts. Being humane rather than metaphysical or theological, moral values can be generated in the workaday world and there is no need of turning to the supramundane to find an expression of the moral law either in supernatural revelation - whether it be in the Decalogue or in the life and teachings of the Son of God - or to the natural

(20) Human Nature and Conduct, p. 288

(21) Ibid.

law as an expression of the Divine will.

To study moral theory means, therefore, to study man himself and all the natural sciences dealing with man. It does not mean speculating on man's final end and on the norm of moral conduct, but it means using science to understand man and his powers. It does not involve a search for some one separate moral motive, but it means the constructing of methods to improve the common lot. Human nature is continuous with the rest of physical nature and exists in its environment

as a plant is in the sunlight and soil. It is of them, continuous with their energies, dependent upon their support, capable of increase only as it utilizes them . . . (22)

Any science, therefore, like physiology and psychology that will help us to understand man becomes a part of moral science. A complete knowledge of man, therefore, will include a knowledge of physics and chemistry and any other science that throws light on nature in any of its various manifestations.

Moral science is not something with a separate province. It is physical, biological and historic knowledge placed in a human context where it will illuminate and guide the activities of men.(23)

Anything which helps to understand human nature in its physical environment helps to a knowledge of the moral. For this reason, man's moral life is not to be distinguished sharply from his physical reaction to the environment which is regarded as displaying forces capable of generating moral values quite as well as religion or philosophy. It is within nature and within man as a part of nature that we are to look for moral values.

But nature, including humanity, with all its defects and imperfections, may evoke heartfelt piety as the source of ideals, of possibilities, of aspiration in their behalf, and as the eventual abode of all attained goods and excellencies.(24)

(22) Human Nature and Conduct, p. 296.

(23) Ibid, p. 296

(24) The Quest for Certainty, p. 306

But in fact morals is the most humane of all subjects. It is that which is closest to human nature; it is ineradicably empirical, not theological nor metaphysical nor mathematical.(25)

Now, when moral science is thus taken as empirical, its conclusions are never to be more than hypothetical.(26) Dealing with unique situations which arise in everyday life, it has no place for universals any more than have the natural sciences, whose method moral science is to adopt. (27)

With the adoption of the experimental method, it follows that progress in moral science will depend not on the properties of objects alleged to be antecedently certain, but on what we ourselves construct.

When it is realized that in these fields (social and moral) as in the physical, we know what we intentionally construct, that everything depends upon determination of methods of operation and upon observation of the consequences which test them, the progress of knowledge in these affairs may also become secure and constant.(28)

In this instrumental theory of knowledge, the conclusions of prior knowledge are only instruments of new enquiries which supply working hypotheses to meet new situations. They are not premises in the logical sense. Therefore, moral science is connected not with a knowledge of principles for guiding activity but with activity itself which remakes the environment in which man lives. Dewey holds one of the effects of dualism has been this separation of morals from activity just as learning in school has been separated from activity. Inner disposition and motives are set up as the conscious personal factor against deeds as something external and physical.(29)

(25) Human Nature and Conduct, p. 295

(26) The Quest for Certainty, pp. 274 and 277

(27) Reconstruction in Philosophy, p. 163 ff.

(28) The Quest for Certainty, p. 186

(29) Democracy and Education, p. 418

This has put the emphasis on self-improvement instead of putting it where it belongs - on the improvement of the world about us. (30) It is there that we shall find a common end for our activity and it is there that we are to look for our moral ideal rather than in some morally great man. (31)

4. Why moral science is empirical.

To defend his treatment of morality as an empirical science, Dewey falls back on his theory of continuity.

Since conscious life is continuous, the possibility of using any one mode of experience to assist in the formation of any other is the ultimate postulate of all science - non-ethical and ethical alike. And this possibility of use, of application, of instrumental service, makes it possible and necessary to employ materialistic science in the construction of ethical theory....(32)

The first manifestation of this continuity which Dewey regards as fundamental in ethical science is psychological.

The possibility of a distinctively moral quality attaching to an intellectual activity is due to the fact that there is no particular point at which one habit begins and others leave off. If a given habit could become entirely isolated and detached, we might have an act of judging dependent upon a purely intellectual technique, upon a habit of using specialized skill in dealing with certain matters, irrespective of any ethical qualifications. But the principle of the continuum is absolute. Not only through habit does a given psychical attitude expand into a particular case, but every habit in its own operation may directly or indirectly call up any other habit. The term "character" denotes this complex continuum of interactions in its office of influencing final judgment. (33)

With every judgment, therefore, we have an act present. This act is the expression of motive and hence of habit and finally of the whole body of habits which make up character. The ethical judgment and character are closely allied since the first judges of a subject-matter which is partly determined by the disposition of the one passing judgment. Character, in turn, is determined by the judgment, for one's disposition is included within the material reviewed and organized in the judgment.

(30) The Quest for Certainty, p. 275

(31) Dewey and Tufts: Ethics, (1908 edit.) p. 304

(32) Logical conditions of a Scientific Treatment of Morality, p. 137

(33) Ibid, p. 126

If it be true that a moral judgment is one in which the content finally affirmed is affected at every point by the disposition of the judger (since he interprets the situation that confronts him in terms of his own attitude), it follows at once that one portion of the generic theory necessary for adequate control of individual moral judgments will consist in an objective analysis of disposition as affecting action through the medium of judgment. (34)

There arises then, the need of psychological analysis as an ultimate test of the truth of the relations set forth in every statement of moral theory. The ideal becomes concrete only as the individual experiences it, while the adjudging of values is a character-phenomenon which (when abstracted from experience), is subject to psychological analysis. It is through this psychological abstraction and classification that we gain control of the conscious processes. This allows us to secure moral ideals from psychology without recourse to metaphysics and the transcendental. Such moral ideals, however, will be particular rather than universal.

But when ethical theory makes statements regarding the importance of ideals for character and conduct, when it lays stress upon the significance of this rather than that kind of ideal, it is engaged in setting forth universal relations of conditions; and there is absolutely no way of testing the validity of such statements with respect to their claim of generality or objectivity save by an analysis of psychic dispositions which shows what is meant by having-an-ideal in terms of its antecedents and consequences. (35)

This concept of continuity in conscious life implies Dewey's other concept of experience. This, too, is also continuous and that not only within the range of mind and sense but in moral matters as well. In developing further new experience, there arises a regulated activity. When this is brought to bear on a conscious control of the nature of the change, there is question of ethical meaning. (36) Taking the procedure of natural

(34) Logical Conditions of a Scientific Treatment of Morality, p. 131

(35) Ibid, p. 134

(36) Ibid, p. 136 ff.

science as his pattern, Dewey holds that experience, if it becomes really experimental, can develop its own ideas and standards. Progress in the knowledge of natural phenomena has become constant only through the application of the experimental method. It is suggested, therefore, that moral science adopt the same method in its own field. (37) While he does not profess "to reduce the statement of matters of conduct to forms comparable with those of physical science," yet Dewey argues that the logical procedure is the same in both cases. (38) The belief in transcendental concepts as the basis of ethics keeps men from admitting this principle of continuity in moral experience. But when the instrumentalist regards the scientific judgment as an act, there is no a priori reason for distinguishing between the logic of natural science and that of conduct. Then we have moral continuity.

From his pragmatic point of view, Dewey sees the logical value of any proposition dependent on practical and ultimately on moral considerations. With his subjective empiricism, he sees the use made of scientific data and experiment in arriving at these judgments dependent on the interest and disposition of the one making the judgment. When this dependence is made explicit, the so-called scientific judgment emerges as a moral judgment. These moral judgments share the nature of the conclusions of natural science in being only hypothetical when employed as the basis of inference. It is the issue which makes them true or false, and until the course of action indicated by the judgment has been tried, they are only hypotheses. With a rapidly altering social life we must expect all valuation to be in some measure a re-valuation, and our progress is to be measured not by reference to some trans-

(37) Quest for Certainty, p. 102 ff.

(38) Logical Conditions of a Scientific Treatment of Morality, p. 116

accidental eternal value, but "in reference to the success of the end-in-view in meeting the needs and conditions of the specific situation." (39)

5. Results that follow from making ethics empirical.

With his eyes on the industrial revolution of the last century and the consequent gains for modern industry following on the application of the methods of natural science, Dewey regrets that the application of the newer methods has not brought the same progress in moral and social life. Science has gained command over nature but the scientific method has not been applied systematically to assist man in all phases of life. Such application is the "specific problem of philosophical reconstruction at the present time." Once man has gained control of nature, he can use it as he will to frame new ends and to secure greater idealism in his actions. (40) But men still look for moral values in a realm of eternal being beyond the findings of natural science; they draw their moral judgment from intuition rather than be guided by scientific hypotheses; in a word, the scientific method is yet to be applied to morals.

The general adoption of the scientific attitude in human affairs would mean nothing less than a revolutionary change in morals, religion, politics and industry. (41)

Following on this strong conviction of the power of scientific method to remake moral life, it comes as a shock to find that the possibility of this transfer of empirical method from natural science to moral science is after all only a hypothesis which Dewey has framed. If we had been following seriously his proposed reform of moral theory, we could scarcely avoid a feeling of chagrin that the method destined to bring moral refreshment to a weary and restless world turns out to be only hypothetical. Whether it would work or not, Dewey cannot say.

(39) Essays in Experimental Logic, p. 387, foot-note.

(40) Reconstruction in Philosophy, p. 42 ff.

(41) Individualism Old and New, p. 155

It is, once more, a hypothesis rather than a settled fact that extension and transfer of experimental method is generally possible. But like other hypotheses it is to be tried in action, and the future history of mankind is at stake in the trial. (42)

What difference would it actually make in the arts of conduct, personal and social, if the experimental theory were adopted not as a mere theory, but as a part of the working equipment of habitual attitudes on the part of everyone? It would be impossible, even were time given, to answer the question in adequate detail, just as men could not foretell in advance the consequences for knowledge of adopting the experimental method. It is the nature of the method that it has to be tried. (43)

Although he cannot predict what definite results might follow from such a transfer of method from natural science to moral science, Dewey is willing to suggest some possible consequences.

First, judgment about conduct would not be formed on the basis of conforming to some antecedent reality but on the basis of constructing enjoyable objects with a knowledge of their consequences to direct us. Instead of looking to the past for guidance from tradition, men will turn to the future. Consequences that flow from institutions and customs inherited from the past are to be examined with a view to modifying them and securing different results. Moral regulation taken from values accepted as part of tradition is to yield to the findings of the natural sciences which are now to have a share in fashioning moral standards. And the reason is a moral that frames its judgments of value on the basis of consequences must depend in a most intimate manner upon the conclusions of science. (44)

A second change from adopting the experimental method in moral science will be to turn men's interest in moral improvement from the subjective to the objective aspect. It is not to be so much a question of self-perfecting as of improving the general conditions that will make possible a better experience.

(42) The Quest for Certainty, p. 194

(43) Ibid., p. 271

(44) The Quest for Certainty, p. 274

Men would think of themselves as agents not as ends; ends would be found in experienced enjoyment of the fruits of a transforming activity.(45)

Finally, the experimental method would teach us to regard standards and principles for the guidance of conduct as well as all our beliefs about values as hypothetical.

Instead of being rigidly fixed, they would be treated as intellectual instruments to be tested and confirmed - and altered - through consequences effected by acting upon them. They would lose all pretence of finality - the ulterior source of dogmatism. (46)

Having done away with the dualism between mind and matter by the principle of continuity, between knowing and doing by the concept of experience, Dewey thinks to banish the dualism between moral ends and moral means by the general adoption in other realms of the empirical method of natural science.

The various modifications that would result from adoption in social and humane subjects of the experimental way of thinking are perhaps summed up in saying that it would place method and means upon the level of importance that has, in the past, been imputed exclusively to ends.(47)

The pains taken to discover a final end for moral activity outside the activity itself has violated the pragmatic principle that a true aim is to be sought within the activity. Such an aim is flexible as opposed to a rigid external purpose which limits intelligence and leaves it only a mechanical choice of the means to be employed. (48) While this search for some end for moral activity has been going on, the vast accumulation of scientific knowledge has been kept as something apart and its significance for activity left uncertain. It is the task of philosophy, therefore, "to interpret the conclusions of science with respect to their consequences for our beliefs about purposes and values in all phases of life." (49) In the experimental sciences,

(45) Ibid, p. 276

(46) Ibid, p. 277

(47) Ibid, p. 278

(48) Democracy and Education, Ch. 8 *passim*

(49) The Quest for Certainty, p. 313

knowing according to the instrumentalist, has meant a type of intelligently guided doing. Philosophy, if it is to be the ally of science, must adopt the same method. It must become experimental and, when freed from "vain metaphysics and idle epistemology", it can concentrate on the social and moral defects of humanity and on projecting an ideal - not in terms of another world or a far-off goal but in terms of a method for understanding and correcting social evils. (50)

(50) Reconstruction in Philosophy, Ch. 5 passim, esp. p. 112 ff.

Chapter V

Morality and Pragmatism.

1. Pragmatism and action.

The father of American pragmatism has described the teaching behind that term as follows:

he (the experimentalist) framed the theory that a conception, that is, the rational purport of a word or other expression, lies exclusively in its bearing upon the conduct of life; so that, since obviously nothing that might not result from experiment can have any direct bearing upon conduct, if one can define accurately all the conceivable experimental phenomena which the affirmation or denial of a concept could imply, one will have therein a complete definition of the concept, and there is absolutely nothing more in it. For this doctrine, he invented the name pragmatism. (1)

For the pragmatist, our concepts are nothing more than rules of action.

To develop their meaning, we have only to determine what conduct they are fitted to produce, for conduct is the only meaning they have for us.

Both James and Dewey adopted this pragmatic method but the latter seems to have come nearer to the idea of Peirce in his emphasis on the active function of our ideas in shaping conduct. Accepting the Darwinian concept of a purposive evolution as fundamental to the application of the experimental logic, Dewey regards thought as ever occupied with the reconstruction of experience which for him is the only reality. (2) Denying the traditional distinction between intellect and will in line with his monistic psychology, while at the same time holding that the purpose of thought is to bring about changes, he is forced to hand over to the intellect the tendential activity of the will. (3) With this psychological

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- (1) From the "Monist", Vol. 15, p. 162. Quoted by Dewey in "The Pragmatism of Peirce" reprinted in volume of essays by Peirce under title "Chance, Love and Logic." p. 301
 - (2) Cf. Influence of Darwin on Philosophy. p. 8
 - (3) Cf. Driscoll: Pragmatism and the Problem of the Idea, p. 33

postulate, truth is no longer the correspondence of the intellect with objective reality. This has been reduced to ever-shifting experience in the process of reconstruction, so Dewey has to propose another definition of truth.

If ideas, meanings, conceptions, notions, theories, systems are instrumental to an active reorganization of the given environment, to a removal of some specific trouble and perplexity, then the test of their validity and value lies in accomplishing this work. If they succeed in their office, they are reliable, sound, valid, good, true.

Stated briefly, "that which guides us truly is true." (4) With truth determined only by results, he questions whether the supposition that what is true under certain conditions may be asserted universally, might not well be called "the philosophical fallacy." (5)

The distinctive addition that Dewey makes to the logic of pragmatism is the use of intelligence as an instrument in the evolutive development of experience. The value of knowledge for its own sake is minimized and the insistence put on the instrumental value of thought as a means to reconstruct experience with a view to effecting changes in the world about us. Rogers sums up this contribution of Dewey as follows:

And here comes in the fundamental motive of Dewey's whole philosophy; it is an attempt to furnish a sound logical basis for progress - progress in the individual, but still more in the social world. Pragmatism is an experimental use of intelligence to liberate and liberalize action. (6)

Dewey insists, however, that this use of instrumental logic is not merely to make thinking a means to a practical end or to satisfy a practical need. Pragmatism means for him the rule of referring all thinking to consequences to determine their final meaning and to test them. These consequences may

(4) Reconstruction in Philosophy, p. 156

(5) Human Nature and Conduct, p. 175

(6) Rogers: English and American Philosophy since 1800. p. 391

be aesthetic, political, religious or moral. All that is required is that they result in some way from thinking, and not from thought alone, but from thinking acted on in connection with other things. (7)

Taking pragmatism in its logical version that he labels instrumentalism, or the philosophy of experience, action is fundamental. But it is action that refers not to the nature of consequences but to the nature of knowledge.

...instrumentalism means a behaviorist theory of thinking and knowing. It means that knowing is literally something which we do; that analysis is ultimately physical and active.... and that active experimentation is essential to verification. (8)

Just as the origin, nature and cure of malaria is not known until we can produce and eliminate it, so in other fields of knowledge like mathematics and the arts "their respective objects are not known till they are made in course of the process of experimental thinking." (9) Things are what they can do and what can be done with them. (10) Reality is the product of our constructive thinking and is known only in the measure in which we construct it.

Applying the experimental logic to practical judgments, Dewey maintains that a factual proposition is only hypothetical when it is made the basis of any inference. Its truth or falsity is shown by the issue. All the facts of the scientist are nothing more than working-hypotheses to be tested by results. No propositions are to be held as absolutely certain. A practical proposition dealing with some end and the means to achieve it is likewise hypothetical until the course of action indicated has been tried,

(7) Essays in Experimental Logic, p. 330

(8) Ibid, p. 331

(9) Ibid, p. 334

(10) Reconstruction in Philosophy, p. 115

for "the event or issue of such action is the truth or falsity of the judgment." (11)

The plans which are formed, the principles which man projects as guides of reconstructive action, are not dogmas. They are hypotheses to be worked out in practice, and to be rejected, corrected and expanded as they fail or succeed in giving our present experience the guidance it requires. (12)

2. Pragmatism and morals.

When experimental logic is applied to moral judgments, our statements of moral truths are, as they were in the case of practical judgments, only hypothetical. Their truth or falsity follows from the issue. We construct our moral truth in the same way that we construct our physical knowledge, not by measuring it against a given proposition admitted to be true, but by starting with a hypothetical proposition and testing the consequences.

When the experimental method is carried over from science to man, "all tenets and creeds about good and goods would be recognized to be hypotheses" to be tested and altered through consequences that follow from acting on them. Since "any belief as such is tentative, hypothetical," it is to be framed to so guide action that it can be discarded like a worn-out tool when it no longer fulfills its task.

A moral law, like a law in physics, is not something to swear by and stick to at all hazards; it is a formula of the way to respond when specified conditions present themselves. Its soundness and pertinence are tested by what happens when it is acted upon. (13)

Not only are we to learn to await results in order to judge of the value of such a hypothetical moral proposition, but we must accustom ourselves to this

(11) Essays in Experimental Logic, p. 346

(12) Reconstruction in Philosophy, p. 96

(13) Quest for Certainty, p. 278

uncertainty in moral judgments.

It is reasonable to believe that what holds moral knowledge back is above all the conception that there are standards of good given to knowledge apart from the work of reflection in constructing methods of action. As the bringer of bad news gets a bad name, being made to share in the production of the evil which he reports, so honest acknowledgement of the uncertainty of the moral situation and of the hypothetical character of all rules of moral mensuration prior to acting upon them, is treated as if it originated the uncertainty and created the skepticism. (14).

Comte had held that the medieval basis for morality found in religion failed to function in modern times and must be supplanted by positive science. This view has been adopted by Dewey who admits the dominant position that Christianity with its ethico-religious character has had in directing man's conduct. But he holds that that influence has been broken, for "its seemingly solid foundation was, however, undermined by the conclusions of modern science." (15) Man's interests became centered in the material things of everyday life, and faith in an ultimate reality, as providing definite norms for regulating life, grew dim. He seeks his rules of conduct not in an idealistic realm of Absolute Reality but in the present materialistic world. The result has been that "the problem of restoring integration and cooperation between man's beliefs about the world in which he lives and his beliefs about the values and purposes that should direct his conduct is the deepest problem of modern life." (16) Dewey's contribution to the solution of this problem is his pragmatic instrumentalism which "needs to be applied to the judgment of values just as it has now finally been applied in conceptions of physical objects. Experimental

(14) Essays in Experimental Logic, p. 382

(15) Quest for Certainty, p. 255

(16) Quest for Certainty, p. 255

empiricism in the field of ideas of good and bad is demanded to meet the conditions of the present situation." (17)

Restricting moral knowledge to such hypothetical propositions would mean, of course, that there are no general propositions dealing with moral truth revealed by man's conscience. The pragmatic theory of morality holds that "all propositions are but the propoundings of possible knowledge, not knowledge itself." (18) Living in a changing world, we are not free to assume such a thing as a value that is unchanging. Our valuations are to be constant revaluations since each new situation has its own distinct value. Progress is not to be measured by "reference to a transcendent eternal value, but in reference to the success of the end-in-view in meeting the needs and conditions of the specific situation." (19)

In morals now, as in physical science then, the work of intelligence in reaching such relative certainty, or tested probability, as is open to man is retarded by the false notion of fixed antecedent truths. (20) Just as the scientist finds no help in determining the probable truth of a theory by comparing it with a standard of absolute truth, so "in morals, absolute perfection does not seem to be more than a generalized hypostatization of the recognition that there is a good to be sought, an obligation to be met - both being concrete matters". (21) This good to be sought is not something that may possess various degrees of goodness, for relativity does not admit a summum bonum.

The better is the good; the best is not better than the good but is simply the discovered good. Comparative and superlative degrees are only paths to the positive degree of action. (22)

(17) Ibid, p. 258

(18) Essays in Experimental Logic, p. 388

(19) Ibid.

(20) Human Nature and Conduct, p. 243

(21) Quest for Certainty, p. 264

(22) Human Nature and Conduct, p. 278

In guiding ourselves toward this positive degree of action, we must be content to frame our moral judgment not with reference to absolute, unchanging values but with regard to the objects of experience.

Thus we are led to our main proposition: Judgments about values are judgments about the conditions and the results of experienced objects; judgments about that which should regulate the formation of our desires, affections and enjoyments. For whatever decides their formation will determine the main course of our conduct, personal and social. (23)

Since every moral situation is held to be unique, each one will require a special application of the pragmatic rule to determine whether it is good or bad from the consequences it entails. There is no universal category under which the single actions can be subsumed, whether we regard that as some final end to be reached by our actions or some supreme law to be obeyed. There is no common end like perfection that could be regarded as the end of all our actions nor is the Divine will to be taken as the final source of all law. There is nothing stationary and permanent by which we can measure progress in moral conduct.

Moral goods and ends exist only when something has to be done. (24) The need for some kind of action proves that there is something deficient in the present situation and we are to seek out the good to be secured on the basis of the evil that needs correcting. Each moral situation, as it arises, calls for a new judgment as to values. We are to be ready to follow the lead of natural science in giving up universals with particular cases subsumed under them and to accept a system of hypotheses and laws for classifying facts. This will keep morals from becoming controversial over such unsolved problems as the nature of the summum bonum, over which men have

(23) Quest for Certainty, p. 265

(24) Reconstruction in Philosophy, p. 169

disputed for more than two thousand years without coming to any agreement. (25)

By doing away with fixed values to guide our moral conduct, Dewey thinks to put an end to another of the philosophical dualisms. This time it is the division of ends into those intrinsically worth while in themselves and those that are merely means to the first. Intrinsic values like religion and art are to be joined to everyday life. Such ideal ends are to become richer by being allied to the economic ends that men have regarded as merely instrumental. (26) This will take the odium out of materialistic pursuits like the securing of wealth, comfort and success in life which have often been criticized as taking men's minds away from ideal values. They might, however, have been looked on as integral parts of values that are now deemed supreme and final. Men are made to act rather than theorize, so they grasp for the material things about them. Such objects, when possessed, are worth many far-off, unseen ideals whenever there is question of directing conduct.

As long as the only theories of value placed before us for intellectual assent alternate between sending us to a realm of eternal and fixed values and sending us to enjoyments such as actually obtain, the formulation, even as only a theory, of an experimental empiricism which finds values to be identical with goods that are the fruit of intelligently directed activity has its measure of practical significance. (27)

Any distinction between moral values like virtue and natural values like health is to be abandoned for "every case where moral action is required becomes of equal importance and urgency with every other." (28) In some situation, health, for example, can be the ultimate and supreme good and is not a means to something else.

Anything that in a given situation is an end and good at all is of equal worth, rank and dignity with every other good of any other situation and deserves the same intelligent attention. (29)

Then again, by abolishing fixed values, conduct is not to be

(25) Ibid, Ch. 7, passim. Cf. William James: Pragmatism p. 45

(26) Reconstruction in Philosophy, p. 170 ff.

(27) Quest for Certainty, p. 285

(28) Reconstruction in Philosophy, p. 175

(29) Ibid, p. 176

judged by the nearness of one's approach to a definite point of moral perfection but by the direction in which one is moving with regard to that goal. A bad man is one who, despite how good he once has been, is beginning to go back; a good man one who, no matter how bad he has been, is beginning to grow better. Perfection is not a final end but a process of perfecting oneself in the aim of living.

Ends grow, standards of judgment are improved. Man is under just as much obligation to develop his most advanced standards and ideals as to use conscientiously those which he already possesses. Moral life is protected from falling into formalism and rigid repetition. It is rendered flexible, vital, growing. (30)

Growth itself is the only moral end. (31)

This concept of growth as the end of morality rather than the attainment of some fixed end or good is consistent with Dewey's pragmatic concept of the aim of education which is also stated in terms of growth.

Our net conclusion is that life is development, and that developing, growing, is life. Translated into its educational equivalents, this means (i) that the educational process has no end beyond itself; it is its own end; and that (ii) the educational process is one of continual reorganizing, reconstructing, transforming. (32)

This testing of moral rules not by any intrinsic value as absolute truth but by their consequences in action makes it possible to have constant development and improvement in morality which is impossible as long as one holds to eternal ideals and norms. (33)

Finally, by doing away with universals in morals and by regarding each moral situation as unique, Dewey would "transfer the weight and burden of morality to intelligence." The human intellect is to be the

(30) Reconstruction in Philosophy, p. 175

(31) Ibid, p. 177

(32) Democracy and Education, p. 59

(33) Quest for Certainty, p. 278

final arbiter in moral questions and for this we need to divert attention from general concepts of ends to the developing of effective means of enquiry for the specific situation. (34) Each concrete situation must be analyzed and the mode of analysis suggested must be held as tentative until the anticipated consequences have been squared with actual results. Moral failures are to be traced to some weakness or bias that keeps men from making these judgments carefully and honestly. Wide sympathy and keen sensitiveness help in making the analysis and decision intelligently and, for this reason, are distinctively moral traits. There is no need of a theory of values to deal with each separate situation. What is needed is "a method of discriminating among goods on the basis of the conditions of their appearance, and of their consequences." (35) It is not a theory of values that should interest us but the objects themselves which have a value in their utility or in the enjoyment they afford.

With his idealistic philosophy that regards reality as resulting from reflection, Dewey would not look for moral guidance in values that exist objectively, for value as such, even things having value, cannot in their immediate existence be reflected upon. (36) The good is something which we construct. He would not turn to objective truth for moral guidance since it often results in confusion to think that truth is at home everywhere. There are realms that reach beyond the bounds of truth.

Poetic meanings, moral meanings, a large part of the goods of life are matters of richness and freedom of meanings rather than of truth; a large part of our life is carried on in a realm of meanings to which truth and falsity as such are irrelevant. (37)

(34) Reconstruction in Philosophy, p. 163 ff.

(35) Experience and Nature, p. 396

(36) Experience and Nature, p. 398

(37) Ibid, p. 411

Besides for the pragmatist, truth is not singular but plural. This plurality of truth is revealed by the methods of inquiry and testing which are in the keeping of science.

Now if moral values do not exist objectively, if moral meanings are not a matter of truth which the intellect can come to know in its search for moral guidance, where are we to look for that guidance? To philosophy is Dewey's answer. But it is philosophy as he understands the term where the approach to truth is in no wise different from that of science. As far as truth is concerned, philosophy is not the donor but the recipient of that which science has discovered. It is the duty of such a philosophy to take the best available knowledge of its time in order to criticize beliefs and institutions in their relation to the good. This does not mean, however, the good as it has been formulated in traditional philosophy which has no private access to the good nor has it a right to claim access to ultimate truth. To carry out its task of criticism, therefore, which Dewey thinks an essential function of philosophy, we are left with a shifting norm with which to measure shifting moral values that "are as unstable as the forms of clouds." (38)

(38) Ibid, passim but especially p. 399

Chapter VI

Morality and Human Nature.

Since Dewey regards morality as integral with human nature which is itself integral with the environment, and since he defines conduct as the interaction between elements of human nature and the environment, it is important to understand something of human nature, as he conceives it, in order to understand his view of moral conduct.

Moral conceptions and processes grow naturally out of the very conditions of human life. (1)

Since the change from customary to reflective morality shifts emphasis from conformity to prevailing modes of action over to personal disposition and attitudes, the first business of moral theory is to obtain in outline an idea of the factors which constitute personal disposition. (2)

Starting with an evolutionistic concept of the origin of life that views man as continuous with the rest of nature and the activity of one individual continuous with that of another, he reduces human life to a mechanical process in which the psychical mechanism is not essentially different in kind from the bodily mechanism.

All life operates through a mechanism, and the higher the form of life the more complex, sure and flexible the mechanism. This fact alone should save us from opposing life and mechanism, thereby reducing the latter to unintelligent automatism and the former to an aimless splurge. (3)

1. Habits and morality.

Within this human mechanism, one of the most important elements in determining moral conduct is habit and habits imply mechanization. But in Dewey's definition of habit, we find once more one of those concepts, like that of experience, which does not correspond to the ordinary psycho-

(1) Dewey and Tufts: Ethics, (rev. edit.) p. 343

(2) Ibid, p. 176

(3) Human Nature and Conduct, p. 70

logical understanding of the term. This he admits.

The word habit may seem twisted somewhat from its customary use when employed as we have been using it. But we need a word to express that kind of human activity which is influenced by prior activity and in that sense acquired; which contains within itself a certain ordering or systematization of minor elements of action; which is projective, dynamic in quality, ready for overt manifestation; and which is operative in some subdued subordinate form even when not obviously dominating activity. Habit even in its ordinary usage comes nearer to denoting those facts than any other word. (4)

In studying this rather inclusive concept more closely, we find that habits are regarded as social functions. They are acquired and not involuntary functions like breathing. They require the co-operation of the organism and environment but in such a way that, as far as morals are concerned, habits are ways of using and incorporating the environment in which both habits and environment have a say. (5) At the same time, habits are arts which involve, therefore, skill and objective material with which to work. This means that they do not belong to the self exclusively since that would mean the separation of the natural from the social environment. (6) Again, habits are affections with projectile power which are active means for ruling our ways of acting. This power can be seen best in a bad habit which "has a hold upon us because we are the habit." These predispositions formed by a number of specific acts are more a part of us than our general conscious choices and they are so much a part of us that "they are will." (7) Habits involve organization of human powers and physical conditions in a joint adaptation. The eye and hand are employed on external material in a co-ordinated interaction in exercising some skill or bodily habit which

(4) Human Nature and Conduct, p. 40

(5) Ibid, p. 14 ff.

(6) Ibid, p. 15

(7) Ibid, p. 24 ff.

must intervene between a wish and its execution. In moral activities, also, moral habits must intervene and must deal not with a private, immaterial world within ourselves but with physical nature. (8)

It is not only human powers, however, and physical conditions which are co-ordinated through our habits, but the inner world of feeling and thought. Emotion, for example, is a "perturbation from clash or failure of habit, and reflection, roughly speaking, is the painful effort of disturbed habits to readjust themselves. "(9) In this co-ordination of habit and thought, it is the act which comes first.

The act must come before the thought, and a habit before an ability to evoke the thought at will. Ordinary psychology reverses the actual state of affairs. (10)

Reason is always influenced by habit which acts as a filter for all the material of thought and it is on the operation of habits that all our ideas depend. Hence, all purposes and commands regarding moral actions are affected by moral habits and it is to this dependence on habit that the inability to think aright on moral questions is to be traced rather than to what a false psychology called the conflict of flesh and spirit. (11) Finally, habit may be taken as an ability formed through past experience but not necessarily limited to the repetition of past actions but available for new emergencies. Such habits need not be conservative but could be progressive if society were not dominated by past modes of belief and admiration for past custom. (12)

These habits, on which moral life depends are not something isolated. They are interwoven, each one operative all the time that we

(8) Human Nature and Conduct, p. 25 ff.

(9) Ibid, p. 76

(10) Ibid, p. 30

(11) Ibid, p. 32

(12) Ibid, p. 64 ff.

are awake and all operating in every act. This makes it possible to speak of character as the "interpenetration of habits." While this interpenetration is never complete, the modification of one habit by another makes it possible to define the nature of the moral situation since it keeps us in a pragmatic mood to be on the look-out for the effects of modifications worked by some particular habit in the body of preferences. This keeps us from judging some acts as always moral and some as always non-moral. There is no need to be thinking constantly of this interaction of habits, for certain habits must be taken for granted without making their operation a matter for moral judgment. An act may, however, at some time entail such consequences for habit that we may need to pass judgment on it. To know when to apply this moral judgment to an act and when to omit it is an important factor in morality.

The serious matter is that this relative pragmatic, or intellectual, distinction between the moral and non-moral, has been solidified into a fixed and absolute distinction, so that some acts are popularly regarded as forever within and others forever without the moral domain. From this fatal error recognition of the relations of one habit to others preserves us. For it makes us see that character is the name given to the working interactions of habits, and that the cumulative effect of insensible modifications worked by a particular habit in the body of preferences may at any moment require attention. (13)

This view of habit in relation to morality agrees with Dewey's rejection of the dualism of 'ends' and 'means' and the corresponding denial of final ends. These are simply the last of a series of means. It is only by turning the end into a means that we are supposed to be able to conceive it and to carry it out. In this series of means, the most important one is the one lying nearest to us and that is a "habit" which is the thing closest to us and the means within our power. To insure moral conduct,

(13) Human Nature and Conduct, p. 40

then, we reduce the process to the mechanical one of building up good habits. Since a pragmatist would admit no moral judgment as certain, he must be content with habits as that element most under his control and must not attempt an exact judgment on each deed. (14) That there will be some uniformity in these habits follows from the fact that they are based on customs which are active demands for certain ways of acting and at the same time moral standards. (15) That these habits will not be absolutely the same in all persons follows from the fact that the customs underlying them assume different forms in individuals according to their physiological individuality, and not by reason of an individual mind which for Dewey is non-existent. (16) For this account of habit which is obviously fundamental to his mechanical concept of moral conduct, he has had recourse to a social psychology to match his social theory of morality.

2. Instincts and morality.

Behind habits which Dewey takes as first in importance in human conduct, he places impulse or instinct which comes first in order of time since it is part of man's original endowment, while habit is something acquired. He uses the two terms, impulse and instinct, indiscriminately, and makes them practically equivalent. He admits taking this liberty with the ordinary terminology in order to get away from the idea of instinct as something definitely organized and adapted. This, he claims, is not the case with human instincts. Out of these original instincts, acquired habits grow under the influence of association with others who already possess habits that are formed. While the loose and undirected instincts of mankind are practically the same everywhere, the habits built on them are most varied. The problem for the moralist is to know how these

(14) Human Nature and Conduct, p. 34 ff. and pp. 37, 39

(15) Ibid, p. 75

(16) Ibid, p. 80

identical instincts have been changed by different environments. With his view of the social nature of moral conduct, Dewey holds that these native instincts so vital to morality as starting points for assimilating the knowledge and skill of mature persons will not develop properly except in a social environment.

The function of instincts in conduct is to act as pivots to make possible new directions for old habits in meeting new situations and to change their quality.

The place of impulse in conduct as a pivot of re-adjustment, re-organization, in habits may be defined as follows: On one side, it is marked off from the territory of arrested and encrusted habits. On the other side, it is demarcated from the region in which impulse is a law unto itself. Generalizing these distinctions, a valid moral theory contrasts with all those theories which set up static goals (even when they are called perfection), and with those theories which idealize raw impulse and find in its spontaneities an adequate mode of human freedom. Impulse is a source, an indispensable source, of liberation; but only as it is employed in giving habits pertinence and freshness does it liberate power. (17)

Since there is no individual soul or ready-made self behind our activities (for the self is only one more event in the stream of events that make up nature), we must not look for more than a bundle of unstable and opposing habits and instincts which come to terms and assume a certain consistency. Such a self is not self-subsisting but in the process of making. Hence, there is no place for such ideas as "self-control" which would denote something that checks this growth of self instead of allowing the freedom that comes through a generous release of self.

Dewey's mechanistic view of human nature comes out with special clearness in his discussion of the place these impulses or instincts are to hold in conduct and social re-organization. Impulses are the instinctive forces that man has as part of his original endowment and hence in some

cases able to be operative before the full use of reason. Despite that, we are to use these released instincts to refashion customs and social institutions. This they have not been allowed to do up to the present because adults have imposed their moral views on the young and have not given free rein to the impulses of youth for the changing of society. By making the impulsive activities of the young mechanical early in life, the plasticity of instinct has been checked and their power to remake old habits neglected. The objection of Rousseau that moral habits are instilled in the young before intelligence has developed with the resulting effect in later life on their religious and moral views is only restated by Dewey. The neglect of the part instinct has in forming conduct means that the fresh impulses of youth have not been asked to share in correcting the wrongs of adult habits but are depressed to the dead level of the habits of the adult generation.

The moral problem in child and adult alike as regards impulse and instinct is to utilize them for formation of new habits, or what is the same thing, the modification of an old habit so that it may be adequately serviceable under novel conditions. (18)

This need of adjustable habits for moral guidance is important in Dewey's system since he holds that no rigid code like the Ten Commandments can be said to cover every moral act, and so we are thrown back on ourselves for guidance.

The only truly severe code is the one which foregoes codification, throwing responsibility for judging each case upon the agents concerned, imposing upon them the burden of discovery and adaptation. (19)

3. Habit formation.

Regarding man as a creature of habit rather than of reason, since man is himself the habit, and having given first place to habit in

(18) Human Nature and Conduct, p. 104

(19) Ibid, p. 103

moral conduct, Dewey has the all-important question to answer of how we may change habits. These, he holds, can be modified by the re-direction of impulses which depend on existing social institutions. The question resolves itself then in part to finding out how to change not the individual but the social institutions of his environment.

The best we can accomplish for posterity is to transmit unimpaired and with some increment of meaning the environment that makes it possible to maintain the habits of decent and refined life. (20)

As to the re-direction of impulses, that is to be accomplished through their use and through education. That these instincts in man can be readily modified, Dewey thinks to prove from the fact that animal instincts are far less infallible than used to be supposed. Man, moreover, differs from lower animals precisely through the lack of these complex instincts. (21) To those who would say that we have laxity of habit as a result of yielding to impulse, Dewey answers that "the remedy lies in the development of a new morale which can be attained only as released impulses are intelligently employed to form harmonious habits adapted to one another in a new situation." (22)

As to the change to be wrought in social institutions, that, too, is to come about through education of the young who are still able to form flexible habits. By modifying social conditions, instincts are to be increased in their creative phase and humane quality. Habits, therefore, cannot be changed directly but only indirectly through modifying the conditions in which life is lived. Moral improvement will be reduced to a question of learning more of the forces in each social situation and of

(20) Ibid, p. 21

(21) Ibid, p. 107

(22) Human Nature and Conduct, p. 130

experimental engineering in the application of this knowledge to human life.

4. Habits superior to intelligence.

In this explanation of moral conduct as dependent on instinct and habit, intelligence has had little or nothing to say. This was not by accident.

We may indeed safely start from the assumption that impulse and habit, not thought, are the primary determinants of conduct. (23)

Thought requires impulse to arouse it and this occurs through the stimulation of the reflective imagination which depends in turn on established habits. (24)

These habits "formed in process of exercising biological aptitudes are the sole agents of observation, recollection, foresight and judgment; a mind or consciousness or soul in general which performs these operations is a myth." (25)

The doctrine of a single, simple and indissoluble soul has made men fail to realize that concrete habits are the means for thinking and knowing. (26)

Against those who have overcome the superstition of a soul but still cling to a belief in some separate power of knowing such as consciousness or sensations acting as tools of the intellect, Dewey takes on the air of infallibility.

Now it is dogmatically stated that no such conception of the seat, agent or vehicle will go psychologically at the present time. (27)

Although positive that we know by means of our habits, Dewey does not make it clear just how this happens.

Yet habit does not, of itself, know, for it does not of itself stop to think, observe or remember. Neither does impulse of itself engage in reflection or contemplation. It just lets go. (28)

Habit incorporates, enacts or overrides objects, but it doesn't know them. Impulse scatters and obliterates them with its restless stir. (29)

(23) Ibid, p. 222

(24) Ibid, p. 172 ff.

(25) Human Nature and Conduct, p. 176

(26) Ibid, p. 176

(27) Ibid, p. 176

(28) Ibid, p. 177

(29) Ibid, p. 177

Despite the fact that habit and impulse do not of themselves know, yet it is supposed to be a combination of habit and impulse that makes observation, memory and judgment possible, impulse defining the inquiry and habit supplying the content for it. Then as we apply our organized habits, the confused situation which we are studying is cleared up and this is the essential function of intelligence according to the instrumental view of knowledge. With this narrowing down of the knowledge that our habits give us, Dewey concludes that we "know how by means of our habits." (30)

Without these habits, he finds confused hesitation; with habit alone, there results mechanical repetition; with the conflict of habits and release of impulse, there is conscious search. Within our consciousness which is simply an event, whose occurrence marks a connection of habit and impulse, there are found sensations which are elements of actions dislocated by the shock of interruption. These sensations fit into the habits which go on undisturbed and there results a framework of objects - past, present, future - which shade off into vague things. It is these residual habits which supply remembered and perceived objects that have meanings. But, when these habits are impeded, there arises a conflict in which impulse is released and in as far as it has a forward tendency, it has the prospective character of unified knowledge. In this unified synthesis, the attempt is made to secure a consistent environment that will restore unity to conduct.

This account of the psychology of thinking in relation to conduct, Dewey admits has, at least, the merit of novelty.

(30) Human Nature and Conduct, p. 177

This account is more or less strange as psychology but certain aspects of it are commonplaces in a static logical formulation. (31)

5. Habits in place of conscience.

Having once committed himself to an evolutionary theory in which man is continuous with nature, Dewey goes the whole distance and outlaws a spiritual soul or intellect essentially different from the material side of man's nature, by which he could come to a knowledge of moral truths.

The isolation of intellectual disposition from concrete empirical facts of biological impulse and habit-formation entails a denial of the continuity of mind with nature...(32)

Having denied a separate mind that could know moral truth, his next step is to deny a separate field of knowledge that could be designated morals.

The question fundamentally at issue is nothing more or less than whether moral values, regulations, principles and objects form a separate and independent domain or whether they are part and parcel of a normal development of a life process. (33)

Because he knows with his habits, man has no special impulse to attain to truth, whether intellectual or moral, that is in any way different from his other habits like those, for instance, formed in playing tennis. This leaves no place for conscience as a source of knowledge of moral law.

Most of our moral judgments are intuitive, but this fact is not a proof of the existence of a separate faculty of moral insight, but is the result of past experience funded into direct outlook upon the scene of life. (34)

Conscience is a name for the experience of personality that a given act is in harmony or in discord with a truly realized personality. (35)

Taking conscience as "the emotion of rightness and obligation, together with the consequent remorse or approbation flowing from a feeling of conformity or non-conformity to the obligation", he holds that conscience in

(31) Ibid, p. 183

(32) Human Nature and Conduct, p. 186

(33) Ibid, p. 185

(34) Dewey and Tufts: Ethics, (rev. edit.) p. 293

(35) Psychology, p. 344

the sense of a faculty is "non-natural." (36) To postulate such a faculty means an attempt "to fix rigid authoritative notions of right and wrong by disconnecting moral judgments from the aids and tests which are used in other forms of knowledge." (37)

6. Moral deliberation.

With these ideas of impulse and habit as basic to knowledge and hence to moral knowledge, as well, and with his view of conscience as a feeling rather than a knowing, Dewey develops his concept of deliberation that is to precede the moral act.

Taking knowledge merely as an instrument to be used when seeking a way to act and denying all final ends for activity, he defines deliberation as a "search for a way to act, not for a final terminus." (38) Since it originates in troubled activity, deliberation is not to supply a motive for acting by figuring out where the greatest advantage lies, but it is to straighten out tangles in present activity and so restore continuity to it. This deliberation does not reach out to the future but is limited to the fraction of present activity that is ours before it is taken up into the stream of events. By a study of past judgments and actual results and by noting the disparity due to some failing in our disposition, we learn the meaning of present acts and how to guide them accordingly. Trying to find a motive for acting through deliberation only leads to confusion and uncertainty in our present activity. At best, it determines our disposition which must be applied in unforeseen conditions and re-adapted through future deliberation. We can never so control conditions that there will be no need

(36) Ibid.

(37) Human Nature and Conduct, p. 187

(38) Human Nature and Conduct, p. 193

of future deliberations as to what is right and wrong in conduct. We must be ready for continuous search and experimentation to learn the meaning of our actions. Truth is something that can be bought only by the adventure of experiment. (39)

The moral is to develop conscientiousness, ability to judge the significance of what we are doing and to use that judgment in directing what we do, not by means of direct cultivation of something called conscience, or reason, or a faculty of moral knowledge, but by fostering those impulses and habits which experience has shown to make us sensitive, generous, imaginative, impartial in perceiving the tendency of our inchoate dawning activities. Every attempt to forecast the future is subject in the end to the auditing of present concrete impulse and habit. Therefore the important thing is the fostering of those habits and impulses which lead to a broad, just, sympathetic survey of situations. (40)

The choice arrived at as a result of deliberation is not a preference emerging from indifference on our part but is a unified preference from among several competing preferences. Not being directly conscious of what we intend to do, we judge the nature of the act by following it in imagination and noting the effect it has on other activities. In other words, choice is governed by consequences. It is not to be made under the guidance of reason, which as a ready-made faculty existing prior to the activity, Dewey denies, but we are to develop more of the emotional phase of our actions. Feeling is "one side of all mental phenomena" and so all our knowledge occurs in a medium of feeling. To regard it as our knowledge shows that it is also feeling. (41)

There is, in other words, no consciousness which is not feeling. (42)

And again, since the "self isactivity" and not something which acts, feeling is a part of its make-up, for feeling must accompany all activity, intellectual and physical.

(39) Cf. Ibid, Part III, Sects. 4 and 6 passim

(40) Human Nature, and Conduct, p. 207

(41) Psychology, p. 246

(42) Ibid.

Emotional reactions form the chief materials of our knowledge of ourselves and of others. (43)

Just as the material of knowledge is supplied through the senses, so the material of ethical knowledge is supplied by emotional responsiveness. (44)

Our moral life, then, is to come under the influence of emotion and our moral judgments must be colored by feeling, if they are to influence our conduct.

A person must feel the qualities of acts as one feels with the hands the qualities of roughness and smoothness in objects, before he has an inducement to deliberate or material with which to deliberate. (45)

As far as reason is concerned, it means the happy co-operation of a number of dispositions such as sympathy and frankness and is itself a resulting disposition dependent on emotional sensitiveness. Deliberation, therefore, takes its rise not in reason but in the depths of instinct and habit with the accompaniment of feeling. So, too, deliberative action flows on beyond the limits of reflection into the depths of emotion.

But there is a point in every intelligent activity where effort ceases; where thought and doing fall back upon a course of events which effort and reflection cannot touch. There is a point in deliberate action where definite thought fades into the ineffable and undefinable - into emotion. (46)

7. The will.

In battering down the distinction between knowing and doing, Dewey has given up the distinction between the two faculties of knowing and willing and has tried to bring the activities of both under the one head of knowledge. He clings, however, to the time-honored term "will," even though it has been robbed of its real significance and a hazy meaning substituted. His monistic psychology has always been at a loss to distinguish

(43) Dewey and Tufts: Ethics. (rev. edit.) p. 297

(44) Moral Principles in Education, p. 52

(45) Dewey and Tufts: Ethics, (rev. edit.) p. 296

(46) Human Nature and Conduct, p. 263

between intellect and will. Thus, he has never come to a clearly defined concept of the will, much less to a correct concept of the freedom of the will which, of course, is fundamental to a correct theory of morality.

Taking habits to be will, Dewey holds at the same time that they are character. It follows then that will and character are identical. To explain the tendential element in activity, he takes habits as dynamic and by taking them as continuous, he explains the unity of character. In this view, the will is not something complete in itself without reference to actions. Will may be taken as the action arising from an idea and ending in making this idea real. It unites me with some reality either by transforming an element of myself into objective reality or bringing the objective reality into the sphere of my immediate feeling. (47)

The performance of the action is the existence of the will. The will is the concrete unity of feeling and intellect; the feeling carries us to a certain result, the intellect takes cognizance of this result, the end, and of the means to it, and now places this as a conscious motive or end in the feelings, and controls them thereby. The whole process is will. (48)

"Will", in the sense of unity of impulse, desire, and thought which anticipates and plans, is central in morals just because by its very nature it is the most constant and effectual factor in control of consequences. (49)

In this description of will, it is clear that the functions of the two distinct faculties of knowledge and volition have been confused in the attempt to overcome an inherent dualism. If we take the will as equivalent to habits which are adjustments of and to the environment, we shall find that Dewey posits not merely a single faculty of willing, for this environment is many and so will is plural. (50)

By regarding habits as dynamic and interpenetrating and by

(47) Psychology, p. 347

(48) Ibid., p. 383

(49) Dewey and Tufts: Ethics, (rev. edit.) p. 187

(50) Human Nature and Conduct, p. 52

linking up will and act into a unified deed, Dewey is able to banish the dualism between the motive for an act and the act itself. In judging the moral quality of such a unified act, he does not regard the motive which is inseparable from the act but rather the consequences of the act. That is in accord with Spencer's moral theory where, as Rusk points out, consequences are taken instead of the motive for judging an act because instincts are unconscious of the end to be attained and hence there is nothing left for a naturalistic philosopher to judge by save the results.(51) Dewey, however, wants to improve on Spencer and broadens this moral judgment so that it includes not only consequences but the habitual disposition manifested in other acts besides the particular one being judged. This means that the consequences of a single act are put in the wider context of continuing consequences and so moral conduct is judged in terms of consequences plus habits. (52)

8. Freedom of will.

With such a vague concept of will, we may expect an equally vague discussion of the freedom of the will. This doctrine, Dewey regards as a desperate attempt to escape the consequences of the belief in fixed and immutable objective Being. (53) By giving up such a belief and substituting for the Absolute a relativity of being and of truth, the need for such an attempt vanishes. Actual freedom, he holds, is not a native gift of our nature but something acquired, while potential freedom belongs to man in so far as he has the capacity for growth and for being concerned in the process of that growth and the direction it takes.

(51) Rusk: Philosophical Bases of Education, p. 37

(52) Human Nature and Conduct, p. 45 ff.

(53) Quest for Certainty, p. 250

In the degree in which we become aware of possibilities of development and actively concerned to keep the avenues of growth open, in the degree in which we fight against induration and fixity, and thereby realize the possibilities of recreation of our selves, we are actually free. (54)

But the conception of freedom in its genuine sense, he would place not in the will but outside of man in nature and public life where it is to be found in man's struggle for free speech, free assemblage, free thought and the like. (55) The dualism involved in the separation of morals from human nature he thinks is exemplified in this whole discussion of freedom of will, when freedom is located in the will of man instead of outside. What is required is freedom in the midst of actual events, of which man himself is one, and that freedom is realized when we act with knowledge of what we are doing.

We are free in the degree in which we act knowing what we are about (56)

This concept of freedom, Dewey enlarges to include efficiency in action, secured by a thorough knowledge of conditions which gives us a certain assurance in our conduct.

He needs a philosophy that recognizes the objective character of freedom and its dependence upon a congruity of environment with human wants, an agreement which can be obtained only by profound thought and unremitting application. For freedom as a fact depends upon conditions of work which are socially and scientifically buttressed. Since industry covers the most pervasive relations of man with his environment, freedom is unreal which does not have as its basis an economic command of environment. (57)

This objective freedom that gives control of the environment includes organization of some kind superimposed on the natural freedom which we see in the harmony between man's energies and the support given them by his

(54) Dewey and Tufts: Ethics, (rev. ed.) p. 340

(55) Human Nature and Conduct, p. 9

(56) Quest for Certainty, p. 250

(57) Human Nature and Conduct, p. 305

surroundings. With this organization, man is hampered in his freedom which loses something of the novelty and risk which are constituents of the freedom that men desire. (58)

Another element in freedom is choice. This is never to be had without unrealized and precarious possibilities which go beyond the freedom of indifference as held in traditional psychology. This idea Dewey finds a caricature of real contingency and of the indetermination practiced by any one who loves reason or excitement. The indifference which Dewey imputes to traditional psychology is "an unmotivated power of choice, that is an arbitrary power to choose for no reason whatever except that the will does choose in this fashion." (59) Such a concept of indifference he holds to be subjective, while he regards it as objective and not confined within one's personality but realizable outside in the world of action. Contingency is only the condition for freedom which is actual when the "recognition of relations, the stable element, is combined with the uncertain element, in the knowledge which makes foresight possible and secures intentional preparation for probable consequences." (60) The indeterminateness, therefore, is to be found not in the will but in the uncertain situations of life which are to be resolved by the will.

Under the title of freedom men prize such uncertainty of conditions as give deliberation and choice an opportunity. But uncertainty of volition which is more than a reflection of uncertainty of conditions is the mark of a person who has acquired imbecility of character through permanent weakening of his springs of action. (61)

Whether there really is any such uncertainty of conditions in the world, Dewey will not decide. In any case, what he wants to constitute true freedom are possibilities for choice open in the world and not in the will, except

(58) Cf. Ibid, p. 306 ff.

(59) Dewey and Tufts: Ethics, (rev. ed.) p. 339

(60) Quest for Certainty, p. 250

(61) Human Nature and Conduct, p. 309

as the will reflects the outside world.

To ~~foresee~~ future objective alternatives and to be able by deliberation to choose one of them and thereby weight its chances in the struggle for future existence, measures our freedom. (62)

This kind of freedom means that we ~~know~~ law not merely to submit to it without further ado, which is fatalism, but to put our desire into execution, which is the way the engineer, for example, gains power over events.

Morality depends upon events, not upon commands and ideals alien to nature. But intelligence treats events as moving, as fraught with possibilities, not as ended, final. In forecasting their possibilities, the distinction between better and worse arises. Human desire and ability cooperates with this or that natural force according as this or that eventuality is judged better. We do not use the present to control the future. We use the foresight of the future to refine and expand present activity. In this use of desire, deliberation and choice, freedom is actualized. (63)

9. Freedom of will and morality.

These views of Dewey with regard to human freedom are naturally reflected in his views on moral theory and practice, since the existence of free will is obviously the basis of all ethical theory. According to him, those who hold the traditional doctrine on the freedom of the will make the problem of moral reformation a problem of self-reformation. When, however, conduct is taken as the interaction of elements of human nature and its environment, the problem becomes broader than mere self-reform. Then progress is to be striven for in both human nature and its environment, while freedom is to be found in that kind of interaction that maintains an environment where man's desires and choices also have a place.

When we look at the problem as one of an adjustment to be intelligently attained, the issue shifts from within personality to an engineering issue, the establishment of arts of education and social guidance. (64)

(62) Ibid, p. 311

(63) Ibid, p. 313

(64) Human Nature and Conduct, p. 10

In this objective morality, it is not a question of changing ourselves for the better but of changing through our activity the world in which we live.(65) The lever with which to effect this change in social and moral life is to be the school. It is only through changing conditions that we are to expect a change in conduct and not through a direct influence on personality, for "we change character from worse to better only by changing conditions." (66)

When the proper milieu has been established for moral living, human nature is to be allowed to develop without check or hindrance. It is not something to be curbed as moralists have claimed, who looked on human nature with suspicion as something rebellious and consequently evil. This attitude grew from a lack of scientific understanding of human nature. With the progress in the natural sciences, this nature has grown less opaque and it has been found that the ends set by morality and the regulations imposed "were after all outgrowths of human nature." (67) Repeating the optimism of Rousseau and the other naturalistic philosophers, who deny the existence of original sin and its corruptive effects on human nature, Dewey thinks that this nature will come of itself to perfection without the need of discipline and restraints imposed from without.

10. Self as a moral end.

Another reason for Dewey's advocating this policy of non-interference in the development of human nature is that he regards potential freedom as connected with growth. The self which is capable of growth is never something finished but is in constant process of becoming - whether better or worse. It is in the quality of becoming better that we are to

(65) Quest for Certainty, p. 275 ff.

(66) Human Nature and Conduct, p. 20

(67) Human Nature and Conduct, p. 2

look for virtue, - in this moving not toward a fixed end but simply toward more growth. Moral conduct will then reflect the idea of growth as found in Dewey's concept of moral theory as a growing science. When the aim of moral activity is thus stated in terms of more growth, it is the self naturally which is to acquire this growth and hence self becomes the end of our volitional and moral activity.

The self constitutes the one end of every volition. (68)

Ultimately, there is but one end, the self; all other ends are means. (69)

Self-realization, therefore, is the end of human actions, in as far as there is question of a final end. But, in regarding the self as a specific activity, Dewey insists on the essential unity of the self and its acts, if there is any moral meaning attaching to these acts. (70) Hence the self and self-realization are made identical and are set up as the end of our moral activity. (71)

Each end is referable to a higher end, which, stated in most general form, is self-realization. (72)

It is not action for the self that is required (thus setting up a fixed self which is simply going to get something more, wealth, pleasure, morality, or whatever), but action as the self. To find the self in the highest and fullest activity possible at the time, and to perform the act in the consciousness of its complete identification with self (which means, I take it, with complete interest) is morality and is realization. (73)

Our final word about the place of the self in the moral life is, then, that the problem of morality is the formation, out of the body of original instinctive impulses which compose the natural self, of a voluntary self in which socialized desires and affections are

(68) Psychology, p. 371

(69) Ibid, p. 372

(70) Dewey and Tufts: Ethics, (rev. edit.) p. 318

(71) "Self-realization as the Moral Ideal" in the Philosophical Review, Vol. II, p. 653

(72) Psychology, p. 370

(73) "Self-realization as the Moral Ideal" Op. cit., p. 661

dominant, and in which the last and controlling principle of deliberation is the love of the objects which will make this transformation possible. (74) The problem of morality, upon the intellectual side, is the discovery of, the finding of, the self, in the objective end to be striven for; and then upon the overt practical side, it is the losing of the self in the endeavor for the objective realization. This is the lasting truth in the conception of self-abnegation, self-forgetfulness, disinterested interest. (75)

Having made self the end of our moral activity, we are to turn to the self to find in human nature the source of our ideals and the source of moral obligation. Once the self has been set as the center of moral life, there is obviously no place for God as the end of all our activity and we have as a result ethical autonomy. This, we could expect from the positivistic and naturalistic trend of Dewey's thought as well as from his holding fast to the Protestant doctrine of the right to self-determination.

The more one is convinced that the pressing need of the day, in order to make headway against hedonistic ethics on one side and theological ethics on the other, is an ethics rooted and grounded in the self, the greater is the demand that the self be conceived as a working, practical self, carrying within the rhythm of its own processes both 'realized' and 'ideal' self. (76)

If we state the moral law as the injunction to each self on every possible occasion to identify the self with a new growth that is possible, then obedience to law is one with moral freedom. (77)

Any attempt then to reduce moral conduct to a systematic following of a divinely revealed code would imply obedience to some power outside of man and would result in depriving moral life of its freedom and spontaneity by reducing it to an anxious and servile conformity to externally imposed rule. (78) Such a rigid type of morality presupposes a static individual and a fixed world, neither of which exists today. (79)

(74) Dewey and Tufts: Ethics (1908 edit.) p. 397

(75) Ibid, p. 393

(76) "Self-realization as the moral ideal", Op. cit. p. 663

(77) Dewey and Tufts: Ethics, (rev. edit.) p. 342. Cf. also Human Nature and Conduct, pp. 12-13

(78) Ibid, p. 307 ff.

(79) Individualism Old and New, p. 170

11. Morals in a changing world.

If a word is added about the world, as Dewey sees it, in which this human nature is to grow to its full moral stature and to develop its moral ideals, it is always conceived as a changing world of the evolutionist. The changes that he thinks to see are not restricted to physical nature and mankind but extend to the social and moral world as well, for "the conception of evolution places the morals of any given time or people in a perspective which renders them less absolute...."(80) Living in an age that is gathering the fruits of the scientific and industrial revolutions, he finds a new intellectual attitude and new social conditions. With these latter, there have come "new moral problems with which neither old customs nor beliefs are competent to cope." (81) As an example of this change, Dewey selects the virtue of chastity. While few would question its desirability, the meaning of chastity has received various interpretations in modern times and celibacy, for instance, would not be held generally more pleasing to God than marriage.

And so we could go down the list of all the time-honored virtues and duties, and show that changes in conditions have made what they signify for human action as a matter of uncertainty and controversy.(82)

Chastity, kindness, honesty, patriotism, modesty, toleration, bravery, etc., cannot be given a fixed meaning, because each expresses an interest in objects and institutions which are changing. (83)

With a changing world and changing concepts of virtue, we are to be prepared to adopt changing standards of values.

(80) Dewey and Tufts: Ethics, (rev. edit.) p. 161

(81) Ibid, p. 189

(82) Ibid, p. 190

(83) Ibid, p. 280

It goes without saying that false ideas about values have to be emended; it is not so readily seen that ideas of good and evil which were once true have to be modified as social conditions change. (84)

To meet these demands for change, Dewey has turned from metaphysics with its doctrine of absolute being and from religion with its eternal, unchanging truth to the flexible norms set by an evolving human nature and a changing human experience.

CHAPTER VII

Morality and Sociality

Among the varied influences that have helped to form Dewey's thought, one of the strongest in its bearing on his moral and educational philosophy is that of Auguste Comte. It is in the writings of the French philosopher that we find the view adopted by John Dewey that philosophy has evolved from theology through metaphysics and positive science into a positive mode of thought superior to both theology and metaphysics. He also agrees with Comte in postulating a unity of method for science and Philosophy; in advocating the use of the scientific method in moral science; in regarding moral truth as relative; in holding sociology as the supreme science; in making humanity the center of scientific, religious and social thought; in considering the aim of moral education as the development of proper relations between man and humanity. For Comte, man could be defined only in terms of humanity, since only in virtue of his participation in humanity could he be really a man. It was through humanity that the individual existed, and gratitude would prompt him to spend his life in behalf of humanity. "Vivre pour autrui" was Comte's supreme law in ethics; "développer la sociabilité et amortir la personnalité" the supreme aim of education.

These exaggerated views of man's nature as exclusively social, with the consequent suppression of his individuality, have been taken over by Dewey and applied to moral theory.

Society is a society of individuals and the individual is always a social individual. He has no existence by himself. He lives in, for, and by society.....(1)

From this dominant role of society in human life, Dewey concludes that morals are social and only social.

(1) Ethical Principles Underlying Education, p. 8

1. Traditional morality individualistic.

Accepted moral theory of the past has been in Dewey's eyes un-social and the reason was because of its belief in an individual soul. This belief has turned men's thoughts to an inner life rather than to an outer social world. Behind this introspective morality, was the dualism of classic psychology with its doctrine of a separate, independent soul distinct from the body. This same dualism had regarded man as distinct from nature and from his fellow-man.(2)

It is fair to say that the psychology of a separate and independent consciousness began as an intellectual formulation of those facts of morality which treated the most important kind of action as a private concern, something to be enacted and concluded within character as a purely personal possession.(3)

Religious and metaphysical interests, by emphasizing the ideal, helped to foster this psychological individualism with the result that:

any moral theory which is seriously influenced by current psychological theory is bound to emphasize states of consciousness, an inner private life, at the expense of acts which have public meaning and which incorporate and exact social relationships.(4)

Formerly the stress was put on a change within ourselves rather than on a change of the world in which we live. Conversion was thought of as something wrought within one's personality rather than actualized externally. This flight to an inward perfecting is only an escape from the social obligation of moral conduct of which the "typical example is perhaps the other-worldliness found in religions whose chief concern is with the salvation of the personal soul."(5) Dewey thinks it possible that this emphasis on the salvation of one's own soul is responsible for the tendency "to restrict the ultimate scope of morals to the reflex effect of conduct on one's self."(6)

(2) Human Nature and Conduct, p. 85 ff.

(3) Ibid, p. 85

(4) Ibid, p. 86

(5) The Quest for Certainty, p. 275

(6) Ibid, p. 31

Self-perfection as opposed to social improvement has been for Dewey an instance of a misguided zeal and the stress put on the first has had the result that:

the idea that the stable and expanding institution of all things that make life worth while throughout all human relationships is the real object of all intelligent conduct is depressed from view by the current conception of morals as a special kind of action chiefly concerned with either the virtues or the enjoyments of individuals in their personal capacities.(7)

The emphasis has been either on self-sacrifice in serving others or on self-perfection in developing one's own spiritual life. Each one is tried by turns with the resulting compromise and dualism in moral life. To overcome this ethical dualism, "it is the particular task of education at the present time to struggle in behalf of an aim in which social efficiency and personal culture are synonyms instead of antagonists."(8)

2. Morality as social.

In developing the social phase of morals, Dewey would have the individual with all his personal traits and aspirations so fused with society that there will result only socialized impulses to altruistic action and to conduct which is at once moral by reason of its being social. He finds:

...the essential factor in morality: the constant discovery, formation, and reformation of the self in the ends which an individual is called upon to sustain and develop in virtue of his membership in a social whole.(9)

Our final word about the place of the self in the moral life is, then, that the problem of morality is the formation, out of the body of original instinctive impulses which compose the natural self, of a voluntary self in which socialized desires and affections are dominant, and in which the last and controlling principle of deliberation is the love of the objects which will make this transformation possible.(10)

The moral and social quality of conduct are, in the last analysis, identical with each other. (11)

(7) The Quest for Certainty, p. 51

(8) Democracy and Education, p. 144

(9) Dewey and Tufts: Ethics, (1908 edit.) p. 396

(10) Ibid, p. 397

(11) Democracy and Education, p. 415

In such a social scheme of morality, the individual has nothing to say in determining the final ends of moral conduct or final scales of values; these are settled within the larger social group. In fact, the knowledge of the moral law is not even had by the individual mind. The existence of a separate mind prior to action and which alone could know the moral law and thus render the individual responsible for his actions is denied. Dewey leaves this knowledge to social intelligence.

Ultimate moral motives and forces are nothing more nor less than social intelligence - the power of observing and comprehending social situations - and social power - trained capacities of control - at work in the service of social interests and aims. (12)

Just as he denies the existence of a separate mind that makes the individual aware of the moral code and, for that reason, personally responsible, so too Dewey denies that the possession of virtue would mean the perfecting of one's own personality.

To possess virtue does not signify to have cultivated a few nameable and exclusive traits; it means to be fully and adequately what one is capable of becoming through association with others in all the offices of life.(13)

Virtues such as honesty and chastity are not to be counted one's personal possession but as "working adaptations of personal capacities with environing forces" which "can be studied as objectively as physiological functions, and they can be modified by change of either personal or social elements."(14) Morals, then, do not belong exclusively to one's self. In the same way that habits require the cooperation of the organism and its environment or as arts require skill and materials with which to work, so morals are to be taken as something embedded in natural and social surroundings.

Recognition of the analogy of moral action with functions and arts uproots the causes which have made morals subjective and "individualistic".(15)

(12) Ethical Principles underlying Education, p. 26. Cf. Human Nature and Conduct, Part I, Sec. 6.

(13) Democracy and Education, p. 415

(14) Human Nature and Conduct, p. 16

(15) Ibid.

The argument used to be advanced that self-perfection comes first and that changes in society would follow as a natural result of the first, but "when self-hood is perceived to be an active process it is also seen that social modifications are the only means of the creation of changed personalities." (16) To be interested in one's own moral improvement is the same as having a social interest in reforming economic and social conditions.(17) It is only the mind that despairs of the effort involved in making the world a better place to live in that finds solace in the cultivation of a personal morality, for "the experimental logic when carried into morals makes every quality that is judged to be good according as it contributes to amelioration of existing ills".(18) Our conduct, therefore, is to be taken up with the rectifying of present troubles and it is only old-fashioned thinking and institutions that have kept attention fastened on another world instead of on the bettering of this one. Moral good, like every other good, consists in satisfaction of the forces of human nature, in welfare and happiness.(19) Thus it is that when the natural sciences, such as biology and chemistry, help to detect human woes and to relieve them, they become moral and are part of the apparatus of moral science.(20) In the same way, education, by developing the power to share effectively in social life, is moral.(21) The converse of this is also true, namely, that all life is moral insofar as it is educative.(22)

As the motive of moral conduct is not to be self-perfecting, so its object is not to be in any sense selfish, for conduct is always to be shared and social.

(16) Reconstruction in Philosophy, p. 196

(17) Ibid, p. 196

(18) Ibid, p. 172

(19) Human Nature and Conduct, p. 210 ff.

(20) Reconstruction in Philosophy, p. 173

(21) Democracy and Education, p. 418

(22) Reconstruction in Philosophy, p. 183 ff.

And no person taught by experience ever escapes the reflection that no matter how much he does for himself, what endures is only what is done for others...(23)

It is not only in the outer world of our social environment that Dewey finds the field for the practice of moral conduct, but it is there that we are supposed to acquire our ideas about morality together with a sense of moral responsibility. We acquire the ways of thinking of those about us and adopt their views either from tradition or from having them thrust upon us by education. So it comes that in matters of conduct a child acts and those about him re-act with encouragement or rebuke as a natural consequence of the child's action. With this natural re-action of the social environment in response to our actions, we foreknow how others will act and this foreknowledge marks the first step in passing judgment on conduct, since thoughts about our own actions are saturated with the ideas which others have about them. From the fact that others are thus having a regard for our actions and hold us accountable for them, there dawns a sense of responsibility for the actions. Not our own conscience, therefore, but society gives rise to our sense of accountability for conduct.

Gradually persons learn by dramatic imitation to hold themselves accountable, and liability becomes a voluntary deliberate acknowledgment that deeds are our own, that their consequences come from us.(24)

From this double influence of the environment in providing ideas on moral conduct and in exciting a sense of responsibility, Dewey concludes:

These two facts, that moral judgment and moral responsibility are the work wrought in us by the social environment, signify that all morality is social; not because we ought to take into account the effect of our acts upon the welfare of others, but because of facts.(25)

Whether a man is unscrupulous in seeking his own interests or whether he sacrifices himself for the welfare of others, his conduct depends on social opportunities, training and assistance. The difference comes from his perception

(23) Experience and Nature, p. 58

(24) Human Nature and Conduct, p. 316

(25) Ibid, p. 316

of social ties and his use of them. The man who is self-seeking in regard to amassing wealth is seeking money, which is itself a social institution, and he seeks it because of the values that society connects with its possession. If money-making is found to be morally obnoxious, it is not because the money-making man has withdrawn from society but because of the way he handles these social facts.

His "individualism" is not found in his original nature but in his habits acquired under social influences. It is found in his concrete aims, and these are reflexes of social conditions. (26)

From all this, it follows that "morals is as much a matter of interaction of a person with his social environment as walking is an interaction of legs with a physical environment" and "if the standard of morals is low it is because the education given by the interaction of the individual with his social environment is defective." (27) If a man were to live alone in the world, there would never be occasion for such a question as, "Why be moral?" But living as he does with others, his acts affect them; they in turn approve or condemn these acts, and make demands on him with regard to his conduct. It is in social life, therefore, that we are to look for a moral basis of conduct instead of turning to the individual's conscience for moral guidance.

The notion that an abstract ready-made conscience exists in individuals and that it is only necessary to make an occasional appeal to it and to indulge in occasional crude rebukes and punishments, is associated with the causes of lack of definitive and orderly moral advance. For it is associated with lack of attention to social forces...Morals are social. (28)

Not only is there no individual conscience to point out what is right and wrong, but there is no such thing as a consciousness of the supreme authority of Right. The interest devoted to this ideal of Right diverts attention from actual conditions and from acts that would improve the social bonds of human society.

Morals is connected with actualities of existence, not with ideals, and obligations independent of concrete actualities. The facts upon which

(26) Human Nature and Conduct, p. 318

(27) Ibid, p. 318

(28) Ibid, p. 319

it depends are those which arise out of active connections of human beings with one another, the consequences of their mutually intertwined activities in the life of desire, belief, judgment, satisfaction and dissatisfaction. In this sense conduct and hence morals are social....(29)

This view of morality, as exclusively social, sets for the school the task of constructing a social environment that will be calculated to instil social virtues in the child and fit him to remake in later life the milieu, with the result that social life and consequently moral life will then be fuller and richer. So too, philosophy is to give up the study of abstract problems of metaphysics and devote itself to the proposing of an ideal that can be used to understand and correct definite social ills. Material culture has been growing toward collectivism, but moral culture is lagging behind with its individualistic ideals from a prescientific and pretechnological age. (30) Against this old-fashioned individualism, a socialized philosophy must labor in behalf of a social morality.

It (philosophy) can make it easier for mankind to take the right steps in action by making it clear that a sympathetic and integral intelligence brought to bear upon the observation and understanding of concrete social events and forces, can form ideals, that is aims, which shall not be either illusions or mere emotional compensations.(31)

(29) Ibid, p. 329

(30) Individualism Old and New, p. 74

(31) Reconstruction in Philosophy, p. 131

CHAPTER VIII

Morality and Religion.

In an address delivered at the celebration of John Dewey's seventieth birthday, Ernest C. Moore recounted an experience of his student days touching on the religious attitude of his former professor. He told how, after having been in Dewey's class for two years, he chanced to be out walking with William James and remarked to him: "Professor Dewey does not often refer to God. He has no such familiar acquaintance with Him as you theological professors have." James replied: "If he does not mention God he is no philosopher." (1) This suspicion of anything that might suggest an irreligious attitude seems to have annoyed Dewey, and he brings up the question in the brief autobiographical sketch referred to, in which he tells something of his religious development.(2)

Raised in a "conventionally evangelical atmosphere of the more "liberal sort" among the traditions of religion and culture of the New England of his youth, he was converted to Hegelianism with its vague pantheism. The ensuing conflict of traditional religious beliefs with philosophical opinions that he felt he could honestly entertain was the source of a trying personal crisis but in no sense a leading philosophical problem. This apparent separation of the two realms of religion and philosophy was due, he thought,

to a feeling that any genuinely sound religious experience could and should adapt itself to whatever beliefs one found oneself intellectually entitled to hold.(3)

Religion and philosophy are to be regarded as being best served by an absolute separation.

(1) Ernest C. Moore: "John Dewey's Contribution to Educational Theory" in *John Dewey - The Man and His Philosophy*, p. 12

(2) "From Idealism to Experimentalism" in *Contemporary American Philosophy*, Vol. II, p. 15 ff. and p. 19 ff.

(3) *Ibid*, p. 18

I have not been able to attach much importance to religion as a philosophic problem; for the effect of that attachment seems to be in the end a subordination of candid philosophic thinking to the alleged but factitious needs of some special set of convictions.(4)

His own interest has been not in some particular form of religious affiliation but in a more vague religious experience that keeps aloof from all sects.

As I have been frequently criticized for undue reticence about the problems of religion, I insert this explanation; it seems to me that the great solicitude of many persons, professing belief in the universality of the need for religion, about the present and future of religion proves that in fact they are moved more by partisan interest in a particular religion than by interest in religious experience.(5)

In a later work, where he puts down at greater length his views on religion, Dewey returns to this discussion and in a chapter whose title is suggestive of his position, "Religion versus the Religious", he defends his attitude toward all formal religious denominations.(6) Defining "religion" as a body of beliefs and practices organized within some kind of institution, he contrasts it with "religious", a term used to denote not an existing church or anything that can be organized into a distinctive form of existence but rather the attitude that may be held toward any object or ideal. "Religious experience, therefore, is not something distinct from esthetic or moral experience, but "religious" may be applied to any experience whatever, whether it be scientific or political, moral or esthetic, for religion is "a natural expression of human experience".(7) This experience, however, is described in vague terms.

The religious experience is a reality in so far as in the midst of effort to foresee and regulate future objects we are sustained and expanded in feebleness and failure by the sense of an enveloping whole.(8).

(4) "From Absolutism to Experimentalism" in Contemporary American Philosophy, Vol. II, p. 20.

(5) Ibid, p. 20

(6) A Common Faith, Ch. I.

(7) "Religion and Our Schools". Article reprinted from Hibbert Journal, July, 1908, in Character and Events - Popular Essays in Social and Political Philosophy by John Dewey. Edited by Joseph Ratner, Vol. II, p. 516.

(8) Human Nature and Conduct, P. 264.

Religion has been regarded as something that brings perspective into the shifting episodes of life. The reverse, however, is true, for whatever brings real perspective is religious.

Any activity pursued in behalf of an ideal end against obstacles and in spite of threats of personal loss because of conviction of its general and enduring value is religious in quality.(9)

Ordinary natural experience, then, has enough of the distinctively religious in it that there is no need for traditional religion with its reliance on the supernatural element. Religion has no necessary connection with the supernatural and will be improved when it is emancipated from it and allowed to develop freely of itself. The religious attitude means "something that is bound through imagination to a general attitude" which implies something more than moral and which can be displayed in art, science and good citizenship quite as well as in the being bound to an unseen power, the characteristic note of traditional religions.(10)

Although Dewey does not mention religion as one of the "culminating aspects of civilization" along with art and philosophy, yet he makes frequent reference to it. It will be important to understand his interpretation of it before taking up his view of the relation of religion to morality.

1. Religion and nature.

First of all, he regards religion as a natural product of evolution. There is perhaps no field in which he writes with such assurance and so little warrant of this process of evolution by which primitive man, in his search for some sort of certainty unattainable through his knowledge of the world, fashions a religious realm where he could have intellectual certainty if nothing more. Not knowing the arts of controlling nature, man turned to the occult, and his superstitious practices gave rise to religion. This in-

(9) A Common Faith, p. 27

(10) Ibid, p. 23

ability to cope with the world made man seek to come to terms with the universe, and his religion was the expression of that endeavor. This attempt of primitive man was carried on by philosophy when it made the universal into a realm of certainty. The Christian Church adapted this view to suit its religious purposes in setting God as the ultimate reality above this world of change and uncertainty through which man would pass by way of preparation to a knowledge of Him in eternal bliss.(11) The religion thus developed by a natural process of evolution hardened into a definite mould.

Religion has lost itself in cults, dogmas and myths. Consequently the office of religion as sense of community and one's place in it has been lost.....Religion as a sense of the whole is the most individualized of all things, the most spontaneous, undefinable and varied.....Yet it has been perverted into something uniform and immutable.....Instead of marking the freedom and peace of the individual as a member of an infinite whole, it has been petrified into a slavery of thought and sentiment, an intolerant superiority on the part of the few and an intolerable burden on the part of the many.(12)

The fostering of this view of religion by the Christian church has focused attention on the supernatural to the exclusion of the natural which Dewey finds the real basis of religion. This positing of the "infinite" is only a sop that human nature uses to explain away its own "finite" failures and disappointments, and the cult of this eternal and infinite reality is substituted for the regulation of life's activities through an understanding of actual conditions.(13) But the religious values in common experience are to be developed by natural intelligence, and

The change gives aspiration for natural knowledge a definitely religious character, since growth in understanding of nature is seen to be organically related to the formation of ideal ends.(14)

Our ideals are to be helped by selecting those elements in natural conditions that support them and, in giving up belief in the supernatural, that

(11) CF. Quest for Certainty. Chs. 1, 10, and 11, passim

(12) Human Nature and Conduct, pp. 330, 331

(13) Experience and Nature, p. 55

(14) A Common Faith, p. 57

selection is made more intelligent by being directed to ideals whose relations to conditions and consequences are understood. If this naturalistic basis of religion were once understood, the religious life would emerge from its present crisis and religion would find its place within the sphere of all human experience.(15) The foundations of religion are to be found, therefore, not in the relations of man to God, but in those of man to his fellow-man and to nature. Devotion to the supernatural has introduced one of those phases of dualism into life which Dewey has set himself to overcome.

I cannot understand how any realization of the democratic ideal as a vital moral and spiritual ideal in human affairs is possible without surrender of the conception of the basic division to which supernatural Christianity is committed.(16)

This turning to the supernatural had distracted man from a realization of the religious values to be found in society, in science and in nature.

The very attempt to secure integration for the individual, and through him for society, by means of a deliberate and conscious cultivation of religion, is itself proof of how far the individual has become lost through detachment from acknowledged social values.(17)

Society, therefore, is to take the place of God, and social values are to supply in the life of the individual and the community that bond of union which is implicit in the original meaning of the term "religio". Just as social values are to be the basis of morality, so, too, religion is to be built up on a membership not in a divinely established society or church but in human society. The potential religious significance of the fact that we are all in the same boat traversing the same turbulent ocean is infinite.

The sense of wholeness which is urged as the essence of religion can be built up and sustained only through membership in a society which has attained a degree of unity. The attempt to cultivate it first in individuals and then extend it to form an organically unified society is fantasy.(18)

Within the flickering inconsequential acts of separate selves dwells a sense of the whole which claims and dignifies them. In its presence we put

(15) A Common Faith, p. 57

(16) Ibid, p. 84

(17) Individualism Old and New, p. 64

(18) Ibid.

off mortality and live in the universal. The life of the community in which we live and have our being is the fit symbol of this relationship. The acts in which we express our perception of the ties which bind us to others are its only rites and ceremonies. (19)

The fact that science with all its data on human nature and the methods of science have not been applied to moral problems is the reason Dewey gave for the backwardness of moral science as compared with the physical sciences. This failure to make use of science has led men to appeal to the supernatural instead of realizing the religious values inherent in natural science.

If the separation of contingency and necessity is abandoned, what is there to exclude a belief that science, while it is a grasp of the regular and stable mechanism of nature, is also an organ of regulating and enriching, through its own expansion, the more exuberant and irregular expressions of nature in human intercourse, the arts, religion, industry, and politics? (20)

The enormous rôle played in popular morals by appeal to the supernatural and quasi-magical is in effect a desperate admission of the futility of our science. (21)

The third rival to the supernatural in religion that Dewey would put alongside society and science is nature, which is to include both physical and human nature.

Religious faith which attaches itself to the possibilities of nature and associated living would, with its devotion to the ideal, manifest piety toward the actual... Respect and esteem would be given to that which is the means of realization of possibilities, and to that in which the ideal is embodied if it ever finds embodiment... Nature and society include within themselves projection of ideal possibilities and contain the operations by which they are actualized. Nature may not be worshipped as divine even in the sense of the intellectual love of Spinoza. But nature, including humanity, with all its defects and imperfections, may evoke heartfelt piety as the source of ideals, of possibilities, of aspiration in their behalf, and as the eventual abode of all attained goods and excellencies. (22)

(19) Human Nature and Conduct, p. 331

(20) Experience and Nature, p. 58

(21) Human Nature and Conduct, p. 323

(22) The Quest for Certainty, p. 306

To the kindly offices of intercourse and communication that mark our social life and to the possibilities of nature, we are to add, then, as part of our religious experience, all the significant achievements of mankind in science and art. Within all this, we are to find "all the material that gives verifiable intellectual support to our ideal faiths."

A "creed" founded on this material will change and grow, but it cannot be shaken. (23) Instead of being taken up with the supernatural, man will look for his ideals in the world of nature and in his ordinary experiences in knowledge, art, education and the like. He will draw his support from the world about him instead of being absorbed with the drama of sin and redemption within the isolated soul.

2. Religion without God.

With no need for the supernatural in religion, Dewey would likewise find no need for God, even though he retains the word "God", but so stripped of its meaning that it no longer would designate the personal God of Christianity. It represents a mere abstraction. The term "God", instead of denoting a particular Being, signifies for Dewey the "unity of all ideal ends arousing us to desire and actions." (24) This concept of God is

connected with all the natural forces and conditions - including man and human association - that promote the growth of the ideal and further its realization. (25)

It is this active relation between ideal and actual to which I would give the name "God." (26)

Several years ago, Dewey criticized William James' method of employing pragmatism inasmuch as he started with a ready-made notion of God, for example, to which he proceeded to apply the pragmatic criterion without making clear whether this method of determining the meaning of God was to

(23) A Common Faith, p. 85

(24) Ibid, p. 42

(25) Ibid, p. 50

(26) Ibid, p. 51

define God or merely add a value to the meaning already determined. In the latter case, there came the question as to whether God as thus defined, or the notion of God, or belief in that notion effects the values given. Dewey held that the determination of the meaning itself was the strict pragmatic interpretation.

For myself, I have no hesitation in saying that it seems unpragmatic for pragmatism to content itself with finding out the value of the conception whose own inherent significance pragmatism has not first determined; a fact which entails that it be taken not as a truth but simply as a working hypothesis. (27)

Starting with the notion of God as a working hypothesis, Dewey never develops the idea further than to conceive of God as the relation between the ideal and actual. This, of course, is equivalent to a denial of God, for, unless He is conceived as a personal, unchanging, eternal Being, then He ceases to be any longer God, call Him what we will. But in following out the pragmatic view to its conclusion, Dewey cannot admit such an unchanging Being.

A religion without God will obviously find no place for the Son of God. For Dewey, the intellectual articles of a creed are to be taken as symbolic of moral and ideal values, since they represent events and persons that have been made over by the idealizing imagination in the interest of moral ideals. In the same way, he holds:

Historic personages in their divine attributes are materializations of the ends that enlist devotion and inspire endeavor. (28)

These objects of religion seem to gain nothing by being held to exist and their claim on us as ideals loses force by being based on proofs that are intellectually dubious. Hence, the function of the working union of ideal and actual seems to be identical with the force attached to the idea of

(27) Essays in Experimental Logic, p. 316

(28) A Common Faith, p. 41

God in religions with a spiritual content.

With God and the Son of God excluded from his religion, Dewey does not believe, of course, in divine revelation which his positivistic tendency would lead him to regard as a less valid source of truth than the human intellect and which his naturalism would brand as "mythology". He tells how, with God acting as the master-teacher,

the store of universal truths was supplemented by the gracious gift of revelation, and the resources of the minor premise extended by divinely established historic facts. Truth was given to reason and faith; and the part of the human mind was to humble itself to hearken, accept and obey. (29)

The historical account in Genesis of the fall of man with all that it entails for the Christian religion through the coming of a Redeemer is tossed aside lightly.

No mythology is more familiar than that which tells how labor is due to trespass of man upon divine prerogatives, an act that brought curse upon the earth and woe to man. (30)

Against this acceptance of truth on the word of God, Dewey opposes the searching after truth carried on by the human mind.

Faith in the continued disclosing of truth through directed co-operative human endeavor is more religious in quality than is any faith in a completed revelation. (31)

That this attitude toward revelation and natural science is not more widely shared among American school children is a matter of regret for him.

Schooling is developed to the point where more pupils reach the high school than in other lands; and one-half of the pupils in the last years of the high school think that the first chapters of the Hebrew Scriptures give a more accurate account of the origin and early history of man than does science, and only one-fifth actively dissent. (32)

3. Conflict of science and religion.

One reason for discarding revelation as a source of truth, Dewey

(29) Experience and Nature, p. 153

(30) Ibid, p. 121

(31) A Common Faith, p. 26

(32) Individualism Old and New, p. 15

would find in the conflict between science and religion. This conflict is a reflection of the one he sees existing between science and the scientific method on the one side and philosophy on the other. The only hope for a new philosophy is to come through giving up the search for the absolute and putting attention on the needs of present life, using the scientific method as a starting-point. Religion, by adopting certain philosophical views, has also come into the conflict and "has found itself fighting a battle and a losing one with science, as if religion were a rival theory about the structure of the natural world." (33) The triumph of science over religion is revealed for Dewey in the fact that the sciences are supposed to have either disproved or thrown doubt on some of the truths accepted as part of revelation.

The impact of astronomy not merely upon the older cosmogony of religion but upon elements of creeds dealing with historic events - witness idea of the ascent into heaven - is familiar. Geological discoveries have displaced creation myths which once bulked large. Biology has revolutionized conceptions of soul and mind which once occupied a central place in religious beliefs and ideas, and this science has made a profound impression upon ideas of sin, redemption, and immortality. Anthropology, history and literary criticism have furnished a radically different version of the historic events and personages upon which Christian religions have built. Psychology is already opening to us natural explanations of phenomena so extraordinary that once their supernatural origin was, so to say, the natural explanation. (34)

Since the application of natural science is the controlling fact of modern life, religion, once it has accepted the dogmas and methods of the natural sciences, is to take on new life by being in harmony with men's unquestioned scientific beliefs. With all the possibilities that they bring of progress and free movement, their efficacy is lost until there is expelled from men's minds the heritage of the immutable. Religion is not to be maintained by trying to restore what the progress of science has destroyed. What has been

(33) The Quest for Certainty, p. 303

(34) A Common Faith, p. 31

discredited cannot be retained but it is possible to help in the developing of the sources of a new religion "by substituting faith in the active tendencies of the day for dread and dislike of them, and by the courage of intelligence to follow whither social and scientific changes direct us." (35)

4. Experimental religion.

Just as Dewey could not tell what the effect would be of transferring the experimental method to moral science or whether it could be done at all or not, so too, he admits that "it is not possible to set forth with any accuracy or completeness just what form religion would take if it were wedded to an idealism of this sort." (36) With no dogmas to be considered, with no conflict between religion and science, the energy thus saved could be turned toward positive activity in making secure the possibilities of actual life. Society and nature are to supply all the necessary religious ideals and natural science is to supply the method for applying them. We are to take the knowledge of nature that we have and, forgetting the questions of a theory of reality and values, apply this knowledge to the practical problems of life. The attitude of the technician is to be applied to values, so that the attention given to securing certainty about them is to go to perfecting the arts of judging about them and striving for them. (37) We are living in an age of intellectual readjustment and, despite the loss of joy, the lack of inspiration, and the materialism of our times, there is nothing to be gained by returning to the ideas that have become incredible and to symbols that are empty.

Bearing the losses and inconveniences of our time as best we may, it is the part of men to labour persistently and patiently for the clarification and development of the positive creed of life implicit in democracy and in science, and to work for the transformation of all practical instrumentalities of education till they are in harmony with these ideas. (38)

(35) Reconstruction in Philosophy, p. 212 (37) The Quest for Certainty, Ch.2 passim
 (36) The Quest for Certainty, p. 304 (38) "Religion and Our Schools" in op. cit. p. 807

5. Morality without religion.

Despite the manifestly atheistic character of Dewey's creed as outlined above, he would not want to admit that his moral theory is irreligious or out of touch with the spiritual.

It must not be supposed that the movements to be outlined have resulted in the displacement or loss of the positive values in the religious ideal. The morality of to-day does not ignore spiritual values; it aims rather to use them to give fuller meaning to all experience.....Above all, it is seeking to bring about in more intimate fashion that supremacy of the moral order in all human relations for which the church was theoretically contending. (39)

His solution for reconciling this contradiction between his atheistic teaching and his professedly religious ethics is characteristic. He simply defines "religion" in a way which no longer corresponds to the genuine concept which would involve as an essential note the idea of dependence on a Supreme Being. That relationship to an eternal, unchanging Being cannot be reconciled with his pragmatic teaching and so he formulates another definition of religion free of "dogma, which usually embodies irrational elements and seeks to force them upon the mind by the power of authority, not of truth." (40) His religion is to be non-institutional with the idea of bringing out the "personal, spiritual relation" as the characteristic of true religion. There is to be a rejection of the supernatural and all that the supernatural implies, while the basis of his religion is to be found in human society, nature and science.

Moral theory which is based on such a religion and is deprived of every supernatural element will naturally lack the universality and the divine sanction which derived from dependence on God as the source of all law, eternal and natural. But Dewey intends his moral theory to be secular.(41)

(39) Dewey and Tufts: Ethics, (1908 edit.) p. 148

(40) Dewey and Tufts: Ethics, (1908 edit.) p. 166

(41) Human Nature and Conduct, p. 52

Instead of regarding its standards as laws established once for all by a divine authority, morality seeks to reach principles. (42)

Moral theory is to give up its reliance on external authority in the same way that religion must, since natural science has been undermining this authority with its natural explanations of what passed for supernatural phenomena. Moral philosophy is to break away from Christian theology with its postulate of a reality superior to that attained by the experimental method. Moral science is to adopt the so-called scientific method as a means for reaching truth instead of having recourse to metaphysical absolutes. Moral truth is to share the nature of scientific truth in never attaining more than probability.

At the best, all our endeavours look to the future and never attain certainty. The lesson of probability holds for all forms of activity as truly as for the experimental operations of science, and even more poignantly and tragically. (43)

The dualism between the natural and supernatural which resulted in man's trying to live in two distinct worlds is to be ended and those values which make life worth while are to be sought in this present world. Morality is to be developed to the point where modern life will find its guidance within its own affairs and not look to an authority outside. (44) The interest in the supernatural which has made men look on this life as a preparation for another life has deprived this present life of meaning. (45)

The attempt to understand nature with a view to gaining control over it for moral ends opens the way for man's activity which, for the instrumentalist, is the essence of knowing with the experiment as its typical form.

(42) Dewey and Tufts: Ethics, (1908 edit.) p. 198

(43) The Quest for Certainty, p. 307

(44) Ibid., p. 313

(45) Democracy and Education, p. 63

Moral knowledge, therefore, is to be sought and moral principles formed without regard for the previous existence of some ultimate Reality as found in religion or in a philosophy that has religion as a background. The maintaining of moral excellence will depend on man's activity, rather than on his ideals or religious beliefs.

Indeed, through the diffusion of religious doctrines, the idea that ultimate values are a matter of special revelation and are to be embodied in life by special means radically different from the arts of action that deal with lower and lesser ends has been accentuated in the popular mind. (46)

An idealism of action that is devoted to creation of a future, instead of to staking itself upon propositions about the past, is invincible. The demand of righteousness for reverence does not depend upon ability to prove the existence of an antecedent Being who is righteous. (47)

We are to look, then, on the practice of good deeds as the only means apart from mere accident for keeping the admirable and approvable in existence. But, when the good has not been attained in this world, men have been accustomed to look to another world where the good exists joined to an all-powerful Reality. That has resulted in a neglect of present good results and a deadening of effort. Instead of looking for certainty that comes to a theory of morality by being based on the supernatural, security is to be gained by the active control of human actions. (48)

Morality based on religion would be directed toward a Supreme Being whose will man is to fulfill through obedience to a divine law. But God and obedience to the divine will cannot be the aim of Dewey's autonomous morality which would make self the dominant aim.

The more one is convinced that the pressing need of the day, in order to make headway against hedonistic ethics on one side and theological ethics on the other, is an ethics rooted and grounded in the self, the

(46) The Quest for Certainty, p. 31

(47) Ibid, p. 304

(48) Ibid, Chs. 1 and 2 passim

greater is the demand that the self be conceived as a working, practical self, carrying within the rhythm of its own process both 'realized' and 'ideal' Self. (49)

The self which Dewey pictures is not a fixed, static, self-subsisting person but a specific activity always evolving in a never-ending growth. As we have seen above, Dewey would have morality concern itself with activity rather than be bothered about ideals. In making the 'self' the aim of morality, there might seem to be a shift from activity as an aim, but the self, in being conceived as activity, is identified with moral actions.

It is not action for the self that is required (thus setting up a fixed self which is simply going to get something more, wealth, pleasure, morality, or whatever), but action as the self. To find the self in the highest and fullest activity possible at the time, and to perform the act in the consciousness of its complete identification with self (which means, I take it, with complete interest) is morality, and is realization. (50)

Another reason Dewey would offer for excluding religion from its traditional place as the foundation of morality is the fact that the emphasis of religion on the salvation of the personal soul may be one reason why moral conduct is made too individual an affair. Men think too much of morality in terms of its reflex effect on themselves rather than in terms of its social effect. Having subscribed to Comte's idea of a substitute for religion where humanity shall take the place of God, Dewey puts the test of moral values in what we do for others.

Suppose also men had been systematically educated to believe that the important thing is not to get themselves personally "right" in relation to the antecedent author and guarantor of these values, but to form their judgments and carry on their activity on the basis of public, objective and shared consequences. Imagine these things and then imagine what the present situation might be. (51)

It may be objected that there is a contradiction between making the 'self' the end in moral conduct, as we have been above, and making our

(49) "Self-realization as the moral ideal" Op. cit. p. 663

(50) Ibid., p. 661

(51) The Quest for Certainty, p. 47

judgment of what is moral dependent on what is done for others. Dewey would explain away the contradiction with his theory of continuity by which one man's activity is continuous with that of his fellow-man and hence all share in the same common experience. What is done, therefore, for others is likewise done for one's self. The pragmatic moralist admits the dependence of his own well-being on that of his neighbor. His altruism, therefore, is at once a giving and a taking. The creation of a new and a better experience in accord with the pragmatic code of morality is to have a double object, - one's fellow-man and one's self.

As a final objection to religion as basic to morality, Dewey points to the unchanging nature of the truth which it proclaims, while, for him, morality, if it is to deserve the name of science, must be something growing and changing as it grows.

The great need of ethical theory to-day is a conception of the ideal as a working ideal - a conception which shall have the same value and which shall play the same part in ethics that the working hypothesis performs for the natural sciences. The fixed ideal is as distinctly the bane of ethical science to-day as the fixed universe of mediaevalism was the bane of the natural science of the Renaissance. As natural science found its outlet by admitting no idea, no theory, as fixed by itself, demanding of every idea that it become fruitful in experiment, so must ethical science purge itself of all conceptions, of all ideals, save those which are developed within and for the sake of practice. (52)

Now religion, if it is to be taken as the basis of morality, must be ready to be taken to the laboratory and subjected to the same treatment as any scientific hypothesis. The approach to religious truth and scientific truth is to be the same.

Thus as far as concerns particular value-beliefs, particular moral and religious ideas and creeds, the import of what has been said is that they need to be tested and revised by the best knowledge at command. (53)

The best knowledge, of course, for Dewey is always scientific knowledge and,

(52) "Self-realization as the moral ideal" Op. cit. p. 664

(53) The Quest for Certainty, p. 299

when religion will not submit its dogmas to scientific analysis, it is to be rejected from his moral theory.

Even though Dewey would admit that the most influential moral idea is that of a revelation once had, or of a perfect life once lived, yet the norms drawn from these sources are to yield to those derived from natural science. The moral guidance formerly connected with religion, Dewey maintains, can be found in large part in the findings of natural science, even though he admits that there are not enough such findings on hand to-day to help us very much in regulating our judgments of value. But even before science has accumulated a larger stock of information, with which to govern moral conduct completely, values can be determined and aims set without recourse to the supernatural.

There are values, goods, actually realized upon a natural basis - the goods of human association, of art and knowledge. The idealizing imagination seizes upon the most precious things found in the climacteric moments of experience and projects them. We need no external criterion and guarantee for their goodness. They are had, they exist as good, and out of them we frame our ideal ends. (54)

Except that Dewey regards the question as absurd, we might well ask: Whose experience is to know such climacteric moments? But we are justified in asking: By whom and how are "the most precious things" in experience to be determined? The word 'most' points to a difference in degree of preciousness and immediately the question arises as to the norm for deciding what is more or less precious in experience. We would want to know on what basis a thing is rated as 'precious' before making it an ideal end. This is an instance of the fundamental problem of ethical theory which Dewey cannot dodge, namely, if ethics is a normative science as it must be, then the norm is to be found in something fixed or else the idea of 'norm' has no meaning. But the fixed

(54) A Common Faith, p. 48

is found in the realm of the transcendental - in metaphysics and religion - both of which Dewey rejects.

In conclusion, it might be remarked that it is difficult to reconcile the attitude which Dewey has assumed toward revealed religion and its relation to morality, with the following statement:

Ours is the responsibility of conserving, transmitting, rectifying and expanding the heritage of values we have received that those who come after us may receive it more solid and secure, more widely accessible and more generously shared than we have received it.(55)

Among the values that are to be preserved and handed on, religion would certainly be entitled to first place from its intrinsic value for both the individual and society.(56) Yet Dewey would have those who, like himself, do not believe in dogmatic religion "contend, in the interest both of education and of religion, for keeping the schools free from what they must regard as a false bias." In place of a divinely revealed religion, the school is to substitute the cult of society, science and democracy. Of course, such a cult could never signify religion in any real sense except to one who has given up belief in God and revelation.

In such dim, blind, but effective way the American people is conscious that its schools serve best the cause of religion in serving the cause of social unification; and that under certain conditions schools are more religious in substance and in promise without any of the conventional badges and machinery of religious instruction than they could be in cultivating these forms at the expense of state-consciousness.(57)

So far as education is concerned, those who believe in religion as a natural expression of human experience must devote themselves to the development of the ideas of life which lie implicit in our still new science and our still newer democracy. They must interest themselves in the transformation of those institutions which still bear the dogmatic and the feudal stamp (and which do not?) till they are in accord with these ideas. In performing this service, it is their business to do what they can to prevent all public educational agencies from being employed in ways which inevitably impede the recognition of the spiritual import of science and of democracy, and hence of that type of religion which will be the fine flower of the modern spirit's achievement. (58)

(55) A Common Faith, p. 87

(56) This point is developed at some length in Hennig: Die weltanschaulichen Grundlagen von John Dewey's Erziehungstheorie, IIer Teil, 4e Sektion.

(57) "Religion and our Schools." Article in the Hibbert Journal, July 1908

(58) Ibid.

Chapter IX
Morality and Education

1. Morality through education.

The deep interest that John Dewey has taken in education for so many years is bound up intimately with the view he takes of philosophy as a science whose field is that of conduct rather than of knowledge. Since education plays such an important part in shaping conduct and the morality behind it, he holds that "philosophizing should focus about education as the supreme human interest in which, moreover, other problems, cosmological, moral, logical, come to a head." (1) He even goes so far as to say that morality and education are the same.

In the largest sense of the word, morals is education. (2)

If a few words are added upon the topic of education, it is only for the sake of suggesting that the educative process is all one with the moral process, since the latter is a continuous passage of experience from worse to better.(3)

Now, if the educative process and the moral process are one and the same, progress in one will necessarily mean progress in the other. Education, as the process more easily brought under control, becomes, therefore, "the key to orderly social reconstruction" and the lever with which to raise the moral conditions of human society. (4) Hence Dewey's faith in education:

I believe that education is the fundamental method of social progress and reform. (5)

With his altruism of the positivist, one would naturally expect Dewey to seek some means of improving the status of humanity. The

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- (1) "From Absolutism to Experimentalism" in Contemporary American Philosophy, Vol. II, p. 23
 - (2) Human Nature and Conduct, p. 280
 - (3) Reconstruction in Philosophy, p. 183
 - (4) The Quest for Certainty, p. 252
 - (5) My Pedagogic Creed, p. 16

positivist's blind faith in the omniscience of human reason would lead him to seek that improvement of mankind where the Era of Enlightenment sought it, - in making man virtuous and happy through enlightening his understanding. The means chosen to secure this result would be the same, - education. That was the reasoning that led to the tremendous interest of the eighteenth century in education and it is the same trust in the un-failing power of the school to remake morality which has centered Dewey's interest on education. Living in a democracy, which he regards as the most perfect form of government (even though he may take a liberal interpretation of the term "democracy"), this education ought to be shared by every member of society without exception; and so the task of providing for the education of its future citizens becomes the state's highest duty. (6)

I believe that the community's duty to education is, therefore, its paramount moral duty. (7)

This interest in education, then, has not been for Dewey, as it was for Spencer, merely a means of propagating his philosophical views. None the less, his views on education, like those of all theorists, are closely related to his philosophy. We shall confine ourselves in this study to a consideration of the relationship between Dewey's philosophy and his theory of moral education.

When he comes to write on moral education, it is hard for John Dewey to avoid the language which has become the accepted form for treating this theme; and yet his meaning can be quite different from that ordinarily attaching to such language. He speaks, for instance, of the

(6) Reconstruction in Philosophy, p. 186

(7) My Pedagogic Creed, p. 17

need of "moral principles" that can be worked out effectively in conduct.(8) Yet, he has told us that there are no fixed moral principles, but that we are to regard principles as hypotheses with which to experiment, or we may disregard the principle entirely and turn to experience for moral guidance.(9) It is clear that "principle", used in this sense, is no longer in accord with the ordinary meaning of the term which implies some sort of fixity, as when we speak of a "man of principle". We must be on our guard, then, to distinguish between his terminology and the meaning behind it.

2. The school a social institution.

Regarding man as primarily a social being who has no existence of himself but who "lives in, for and by society," Dewey will have the school and education both share in this same social character. The school is to be a miniature social community and education is effected when the child is brought to share in the social consciousness of the race and to take part in the activities of the various groups to which he belongs.

I believe that the school is primarily a social institution. Education being a social process, the school is simply that form of community life in which all those agencies are concentrated that will be most effective in bringing the child to share in the inherited resources of the race, and to use his own powers for social ends. (10)

With man primarily a social being, the school primarily a social institution, education a social process, there remains the fourth element, morality, and that too, Dewey regards as social.

The moral and the social quality of conduct are, in the last analysis, identical with each other. (11)

When society is thus made the basis for morality and for

(8) Moral Principles in Education, p. 57

(9) Human Nature and Conduct, p. 239 and Reconstruction in Philosophy, p. 78 ff

(10) My Pedagogic Creed, p. 7

(11) Democracy and Education, p. 416

education, there are certain conclusions that follow with regard to the school. First of all, the moral accountability of the school will no longer be primarily to the Church or to the family, but to society.

The moral responsibility of the school, and of those who conduct it, is to society. (12)

Besides, morality measured in terms of sociality is made the only aim of the school.

Apart from participation in social life, the school has no moral end nor aim. (13)

The idea that the moral work and worth of the public school system as a whole are to be measured by its social value is, indeed, a familiar notion. (14)

Dewey also maintains the converse of this view, namely,

All education which develops power to share effectively in social life is moral. (15)

To develop this power to share in social life, the school itself is to be a "genuine form of active community life," since living a social life later with all that it implies for the moral life can only come through a growth in social life within the school. Dewey would have the child prepared for social life by letting him share in it. The school, therefore, is to be a miniature society and thus initiate the child into the life of a good society so that, by growing accustomed early to the demands of a better world, he will go forth with a desire to improve the present social order. Apart from fostering this growth into society, the school has no moral purpose.

3. Moral education as growth.

This brings us to a fundamental doctrine in the whole of Dewey's

(12) Moral Principles in Education, p. 7

(13) Ibid, p. 11

(14) Ibid, p. 8

(15) Democracy and Education, p. 418

educational theory, namely, that education is not to be taken as a preparation for future living but is itself a life-process.

I believe that education, therefore, is a process of living and not a preparation for future living. (16)

When preparation is made the controlling end, then the potentialities of the present are sacrificed to a supposititious future....We always live at the time we live and not at some other time, and only by extracting at each present time the full meaning of each present experience are we prepared for doing the same thing in the future. This is the only preparation which in the long run amounts to anything. (17)

In the old-fashioned view of education as a preparation, philosophical dualism had worked itself out in the practical field of education into a system where it was regarded as a means to make ready for something coming later; just as childhood was taken as a preparation for adult life and the present life for one beyond the grave. Always the future and not the present had been the significant thing in education, whether that was looked on as the acquisition of knowledge and skill for future use, or as a process in which the adult, through instruction, training and moral discipline, brings the child to the point where he can look out for himself. Against this dualism, Dewey takes his stand by maintaining that the educative process is in reality all one with the process of living, with no other end in view except growth or the continuous reconstruction of experience.

Getting from the present the degree and kind of growth there is in it is education. (18)

Now, since a person is always in the process of growing, education becomes only incidentally a preparation for something coming later.

(16) My Pedagogic Creed, p. 7

(17) Experience and Education, p. 51

(18) Reconstruction in Philosophy, p. 184

To combat this dualism brought into educational theory by the idea of preparation, Dewey has fastened on the element of growth as the dominant characteristic of living things. This no doubt satisfies his monistic interpretation of reality in which he takes growth as a continuously progressive process that knows only temporal changes but no causal law, since it has no end save more growth. While there are other more important elements that might have been chosen as distinctive of a living rational being, Dewey's belief in evolution has, no doubt, led him to concentrate on this single phase of human life. It is in terms of growth that he explains life itself and the various phases of life for, with the denial of final causes, he fixes on growth as the end of the life-process rather than as a means to an end. When education is taken as a process of living and growth as the characteristic of life, "education is all one with growing." (19) Education, therefore, both in regard to the process itself and in regard to its aim, is to be explained in terms of growth, for "the process and the goal of education are one and the same thing." (20)

We have laid it down that the educative process is a continuous process of growth, having as its aim at every stage an added capacity of growth. (21)

Since in reality there is nothing to which growth is relative save more growth, there is nothing to which education is subordinate save more education. (22)

Growth is likewise to designate the end of morality, since it is not perfection that we are to aim at as a final goal but rather the process of perfecting; honesty, for example, is not something fixed but

(19) Democracy and Education, p. 62

(20) My Pedagogic Creed, p. 13

(21) Democracy and Education, p. 63

(22) Ibid, p. 60

a direction of change in the nature of our experience.

Growth itself is the only moral "end." (23)

It (morals) is all one with growing. (24)

When the identity of the moral process with the processes of specific growth is realized, the more conscious and formal education of childhood will be seen to be the most economical and efficient means of social advance and reorganization, and it will also be evident that the test of all institutions of adult life is their effect in furthering continued education. (25)

What has been said above of education in general applies to moral education as well. It is not to be directed toward any static goal, whether that be taken as perfection, eternal salvation or adulthood. But child and adult alike are to be sensitive to the moral values of the present situation, since morality is a growing experience and cannot be restricted to unchanging moral values of whatever type they may be. Moral values change with the changing times. If it is objected that this restriction to the present life-experience does not provide for the moral disciplining of the child, Dewey answers that "if we identify ourselves with the real instincts and needs of childhood, and ask only after its fullest assertion and growth, the discipline and information and culture of adult life shall all come in their due season." (26) To secure this moral growth in the child, he demands a certain amount of liberty of action and self-expression, the extent of which may be gathered from the following sentence..

But liberty for the child is the chance to test all impulses and tendencies on the world of things and people in which he finds himself, sufficiently to discover their character so that he may get rid of those which are harmful, and develop those which are useful

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- (23) Reconstruction in Philosophy, p. 177
(24) Human Nature and Conduct, p. 280
(25) Reconstruction in Philosophy, p. 186
(26) The School and Society, p. 54

to himself and others. (27)

This liberty, as he expresses it elsewhere, is to be limited only by what is physically possible and what his neighbors will stand for. (28)

4. Moral education as growth in social-mindedness.

Another phase of moral education, as Dewey conceives it, which is more tangible than growth, but related to it, is the social element. Inspired by Comte's concept of altruism, Dewey has made social values a measure of morality; and so moral education will be expected to stress the social virtues, such as service to others, neighborliness, comradeship, etc., for "what endures is only what is done for others." Just as instrumentalism finds a value in knowledge only in so far as it helps us to solve some difficulty and not for its own sake, so moral values are to be found only in what we do for others and not in virtue for its own sake. There is no question of a value residing in self-perfection through the acquiring of virtues, although we could expect self-perfection to overflow into the social virtue of self-sacrifice.

When the school introduces and trains each child of society into membership within such a little community, saturating him with the spirit of service, and providing him with the instruments of effective self-direction, we shall have the deepest and best guaranty of a larger society which is worthy, lovely, and harmonious. (29)

It is hard to see how such a life of devoted self-service to the community can logically be expected of one who has not been trained to self-denial, since the good of the community will of necessity make demands on the individual to sacrifice his own likes in favor of the common good. Dewey, however, regards self-denial as something unnatural, a

(27) John Dewey and Evelyn Dewey: Schools of To-morrow, p. 138

(28) Ibid, p. 139

(29) The School and Society, p. 27

perversion of the truth which maims and distorts human nature. It narrows the idea of the good and leads to asceticism with a purely negative concept of virtue making morality a mere struggle against temptation to sin. As he views asceticism, its only claim is that "human nature, just as human nature, requires to have violence done it." (30) Since he regards the account in Genesis of man's transgression with its consequent curse as so much "mythology", there would be no question of original sin to account for the fact that human nature is now a partially corrupted nature which is in need of violence to attain its end in life. (31) Without original sin and its effects, there is no explanation offered by Dewey for the inward struggle between man's higher and lower natures, a struggle which is too clearly evident from introspection to be simply denied. The existence of this conflict was manifest to the pagans, and self-denial, as a means of combating the tendencies of man's lower nature, is not merely a Christian virtue but a demand of natural reason. That is why the "sustine, abstine" of the pagan philosopher was regarded as a requirement of wisdom.

Denying the need of self-denial, therefore, in moral education, Dewey proposes in place of self-suppression the theory of self-expression.

Morals is a matter of direction, not of suppression. (32)

While it would be unwise to make the negative phase of moral training, namely, the correcting of wrong-doing, the all-important aim, yet one must find room for this element combined with the imparting of positive ideals. It is unsound to rely solely on the "expulsive power" of a generous affection without the more prosaic self-conquest to meet the demands made on us by community life. It would have been more correct for Dewey to say that

(30) Dewey and Tufts: Ethics, (1908 edit.) p. 367

(31) Experience and Nature, p. 121

(32) Dewey and Tufts: Ethics, (1908 edit.) p. 368

morality concerned itself with both the positive phase of making efforts in behalf of some end to be attained and the negative phase of suppressing anything that would keep us from reaching that goal. But he wants attention fastened only on some positive end to be secured and refuses to see any value in restraint practiced for its own sake as a means of adding strength to those positive efforts.

The only restraint, the only holding-in, that is of any worth is that which comes through holding powers concentrated upon a positive end. (33)

He would place the emphasis on the "demand for constant reconstruction and rearrangement of the habitual powers of the self," which is to result in a self in which "socialized desires and affections are dominant." (34)

To make possible the teaching of the social virtues and by so doing provide for the moral development of the child, the program of the school that Dewey outlines is to follow the evolution of society and be adapted to the needs of society. The child is to work along the same lines as those from which civilization has come and, by carrying on these fundamental activities within a group, he is to acquire the purpose behind them. Now the great bond of society for Dewey is work, for work is "the social basis of living."

Work is essentially social in its character, for the occupations which people carry on are for human needs and ends.....Without these occupations, which are essentially social life - that is human life - civilization cannot go on. (35)

The school, therefore, is to take over this social element of work and is to become an active school where the child will learn by doing work of various types, as cooking, sewing, manual training, etc.

(33) Moral Principles in Education, p. 54

(34) Dewey and Tufts: Ethics (1980 edit.) p. 366 and p. 397

(35) Schools of To-morrow, p. 164

In the previous chapter we found that the primary subject matter of knowing is that contained in learning how to do things of a fairly direct sort. The educational equivalent of this principle is the consistent use of simple occupations which appeal to the powers of youth and which typify general modes of social activity. (36)

The child is to work with his hands at occupations that are social in their origin and use, and then proceed to a clearer knowledge of the materials and laws involved by learning from the experience of others. It is this constructive activity which is to be the center of correlation for the school subjects rather than science, literature, history or geography. (37)

The introduction of these occupational subjects is to provide for more self-activity, self-expression and self-direction on the part of the child. They are to be conceived as "methods of living and learning, not as distinct studies."

Relate the school to life, and all studies are of necessity correlated. (38)

But from a moral standpoint, the active school with its occupations is to provide directly for moral discipline through the acquiring of social virtues connected with work done in conjunction with others, - habits of helpfulness, responsibility for a share in the work, perseverance in the task undertaken.

Moreover, if the school is related as a whole to life as a whole, its various aims and ideals - culture, discipline, information, utility - cease to be variants, for one of which we must select one study and for another another. The growth of the child in the direction of social capacity and service, his larger and more vital union with life, becomes the unifying aim; and discipline, culture, and information fall into place as phases of this growth. (39)

This interest, then, in the welfare of the community is a moral habit to which all special school habits are to be related if they are to be vital.

(36) Democracy and Education, p. 241

(37) My Pedagogic Creed, Art. III. Cf. also Moral Principles in Education, pp. 14 ff.

(38) The School and Society, p. 81

(39) The School and Society, p. 81

When the emphasis is put on constructive activity and a sharing with others in the labor instead of on absorption of knowledge and mere learning, a social spirit is cultivated and a social division of labor maintained as opposed to the individualism of the old-fashioned school with its book learning and its giving back of what was learned in individual recitations. Finally, by directing the child's active powers and constructive abilities to the present task with its present needs and responsibilities instead of to some future goal, moral power is gained and the center of ethical gravity is shifted from selfish absorption to social service. We are not to look for character training combined with instruction as long as learning and doing are kept apart. (40)

The attempt to attach genuine moral effectiveness to the mere processes of learning, and to the habits which go along with learning, can result only in a training infected with formality, arbitrariness, and an undue emphasis upon failure to conform. (41)

The basic moral value, therefore, that Dewey has in mind as a product of the active school is the linking up organically of moral growth with the school subjects and methods of the classroom rather than the dependence on explicit moral instruction. Once again, it is a question of the separation of learning from moral development.

The two theories chiefly associated with the separation of learning from activity, and hence from morals, are those which cut off inner disposition and motive - the conscious personal factor - and deeds as purely physical and outer; and which set action from interest in opposition to that from principle. Both of these separations are overcome in an educational scheme where learning is the accompaniment of continuous activities or occupations which have a social aim and utilize the materials of typical social situations. For under such conditions, the school becomes itself a form of social life, a miniature community and one in close interaction with other modes of associated experience beyond school walls. All education which develops power to share effectively in social life is moral. (42)

(40) Moral Principles in Education, Chs. II and III passim.

(41) Ibid, p. 27

(42) Democracy and Education, p. 418

How this carry-over of moral training from the smaller social group within the school to the larger one outside it, or from childhood to manhood is to be guaranteed is not clear, since Dewey is definitely opposed to transfer of training. (43) Besides, the pragmatic concept of morality gives no assurance that any two groups will regard the same moral truth as applying to them in the same way. This difficulty, of course, is accentuated when moral values themselves are taken as changing with time and the changing conditions of life.

Chastity, kindness, honesty, patriotism, modesty, toleration, bravery, etc., cannot be given a fixed meaning, because each expresses an interest in objects and institutions which are changing. In form, as interests, they may be permanent, since no community could endure in which there were not, say, fair dealing, public spirit, regard for life, faithfulness to others. But no two communities conceive the objects to which these qualities attach in quite identical ways. (44)

In taking the school as a place intended primarily for living rather than for learning, Dewey has little esteem for any direct instruction in morality. The moral virtues of society are to be acquired through practice instead of through hearing about them. For the normal child, therefore, there is not so much need to have isolated moral lessons about honesty or truthfulness as to have formed "habits of social imagination and conception." With these, he can interpret situations that may arise in terms of the whole of social life. Hence, Dewey divides ideas into moral ideas and ideas about morality. The first help to improve conduct, while the second are indifferent and so can be either moral or unmoral. Now, moral ideas can be implanted in youth through any subject in the curriculum save, by some strange contradiction as Prantl points out, through the subject of morality itself. Such instruction would be about morality and so

(43) Ibid, p. 73 ff.

(44) Dewey and Tufts: Ethics. (rev. edit.) p. 280

of little or no use in moral formation. Of course, Dewey is correct in holding that there is nothing in the nature of ideas about honesty, for instance, that would of necessity make a person honest, - hence the need of something that goes deeper than mere instruction. But he overstates the case when he allows little or no place for moral teaching on the ground that it is only instruction about morals. It is true in moral science, as in any other, that theory comes before practice and, because some moral teaching has turned into mere moralizing, we are not justified in excluding proper moral instruction from the school. (45) The practice of moral virtues, developed through the social life of the class-room, important though it may be, is not a sufficient training to meet the moral problems that will occur in later life, when the child has left school.

Instruction in morality would also be excluded from the school by Dewey on the charge that it is a case of habit-formation which the adult generation exercises over the young instead of allowing the impulses of youth to help in the formation of new habits. This has come to be taken as the normal process and so "where following is taken to be normal, moral originality is pretty sure to be eccentric." (46) While Dewey is not ready to go so far as to take the more or less spontaneous actions of the child as setting moral forms to be conformed to by the teacher, yet these actions are to be interpreted and responded to as the "material which, in however transformed a shape, is the only ultimate constituent of future moral conduct and character." (47) In his moral standard for testing the work of the school, he includes the question as to whether the school

(45) Cf. Rudolf Prantl: "Dewey als Pädagoge" in Vierteljahrsschrift für wissenschaftliche Pädagogik. 1 Band, 1925, p. 601

(46) Human Nature and Conduct, p. 65

(47) Moral Principles in Education, p. 48

attaches sufficient importance to these spontaneous instincts and impulses of the child. (48) It would seem to be a radical disregard for the value of inherited moral traditions and a strange disregard for the high idealism of the teaching profession that sees in the effort to transplant in the young the inherited moral habits of the past, a means of taking advantage of the helplessness of youth.

When we think of the docility of the young we first think of the stocks of information adults wish to impose and the ways of acting they want to reproduce. Then we think of the insolent coercions, the insinuating briberies, the pedagogic solemnities by which the freshness of youth can be faded and its vivid curiosities dulled. Education becomes the art of taking advantage of the helplessness of the young; the forming of habits becomes a guarantee for the maintenance of hedges of custom. (49)

This disregard for the value of moral teaching is closely allied with Dewey's idea of the place of the teacher in the school.

The teacher is not in the school to impose certain ideas or to form certain habits in the child, but is there as a member of the community to select the influences which shall affect the child and assist him in responding to these influences. (50)

In his effort to combat the type of school where too much of the stimulus came from the teacher, Dewey has gone to the other extreme of reducing the teacher to something like an observer with little or no positive influence on the pupil. Such a view is opposed to the concept of education which sees in the positive influence of a teacher an essential element of the educational process. But it is especially harmful to the moral education of the child where so much must depend on this positive influence of a mature person. Dewey would admit:

The mature person, to put it in moral terms, has no right to withhold from the young on given occasions whatever capacity for sympathetic understanding his own experience has given him. (51)

(48) Ibid, p. 53

(49) Human Nature and Conduct, p. 64

(50) My Pedagogic Creed, p. 9

(51) Experience and Education, p. 52

But the immature child has need of more than sympathy; he is in need of the definite influence of the teacher coming to him through instruction, counsel, and good example. These cannot be substituted for entirely by the casual social intercourse between pupil and teacher for which Dewey does make provision. (52) What is still more revolutionary in his scheme and more disastrous to moral training is the fact that the authority of the teacher - to be displaced by the co-operative work of the class-room, since "the primary source of social control resides in the very nature of the work done as a social enterprise in which all individuals have an opportunity to contribute and to which all feel a responsibility." (53) Failure to develop the virtue of obedience, so basic to all societies either in or outside of school, is a well warranted charge against the child-centered school. But, of course, it is true that in a philosophy of education such as Dewey's, where God is banished from the school-room both in theory and in practice, there is no sufficient motive for demanding obedience from the child to his teacher as to one who has authority from God, the source of all authority.

Having made the teacher's influence largely negative, the next step for Dewey is to regard the teacher as a useful but not an essential element in the educational process. Then it becomes a problem of supplying the proper environment with the materials and appliances to fit the child's powers and needs along with the proper means for operating them.

The problem of educators, teachers, parents, the state, is to provide the environment that induces educative or developing activities, and where these are found the one thing needful in education is secured. (54)

(52) Moral Principles in Education, p. 56

(53) Experience and Education, p. 61

(54) Interest and Effort in Education, p. 96

The provision for moral education, therefore, in terms of a social morality, has meant for Dewey a Copernican revolution in which the child has become the center of the school-life. This change has brought with it a revolution in the type of school, in the methods employed, and in the program of studies. We can hardly do better than use his own words in summing up the change that occurs in the school's attitude toward moral education, when the school and society are taken as two inseparable phases of the same reality.

I sum up, then, this part of the discussion by asking your attention to the moral trinity of the school. The demand is for social intelligence, social power, and social interests. Our resources are (1) the life of the school as a social institution in itself; (2) methods of learning and of doing work; and (3) the school studies or curriculum. In so far as the school represents, in its own spirit, a genuine community life; in so far as what are called school discipline, government, order, etc., are the expressions of this inherent social spirit; in so far as the methods used are those that appeal to the active and constructive powers, permitting the child to give out and thus to serve; in so far as the curriculum is so selected and organized as to provide the material for affording the child a consciousness of the world in which he has to play a part, and the demands he has to meet; so far as these ends are met, the school is organized on an ethical basis. So far as general principles are concerned, all the basic ethical requirements are met. The rest remains between the individual teacher and the individual child. (55)

To this summary of Dewey's views on moral training based on an exaggerated social philosophy, as outlined in Chapter VII, we have only to add that the moral instruction itself is to have a very minor or no place at all in the school, while religious instruction is to be absolutely excluded, as we have seen in Chapter VIII. In substituting sociality for morality and by banning religion from the school, he has deprived it of the foundations of all life which is at once ethical and religious. How the school, thus deprived of the only firm basis of social living, can be called a miniature society in any real sense is hard to see.

(55) Moral Principles in Education, p. 43

Chapter X

Summary and Evaluation

The aim of this study has been not so much to give a thorough criticism of John Dewey's moral theory and its application to education, as to present a more or less complete picture of it as we find it sketched in broken outline through his various writings. The mere presentation of his moral teaching would be quite sufficient in many instances to suggest its own refutation, since it is so directly opposed to sound common sense and the ordinary experience of mankind. Valuable as some of his views on the general subject of education may be, even there, no less than in ethics, his theory suffers from the lack of a consistent philosophy. And consistency is, after all, the first requirement in a philosopher. It is through a lack of a consistent philosophy that the social phase of education or the place of manual work in the school - two ideas so suggestive and valuable in themselves - have been overemphasized. A balanced philosophy would have brought out the ethical nature of man more clearly and the importance of individual personality as distinct from the social aspect of human nature. It would have revealed man as something more than an active being who seeks knowledge only for the sake of using it in some activity. The delight man takes in knowledge for its own sake, apart from its instrumental value, would have received recognition in the organization of the curriculum through the inclusion of the more cultural studies along with the utilitarian. But above all else, a consistent philosophy would have shown man in his completeness to be not only a social being but, by nature, a religious being. From religion, comes that inner longing and unrest which cannot be satisfied with the mere knowledge and mastery of physical nature,

the material comfort of an age of invention, or the hum-drum vocational activity of a workaday world.

In restricting itself to his moral philosophy, this study has obviously hit on the weakest spot in Dewey's comprehensive work in educational theory and practice, - the ethical phase with its lack of a religious foundation for morality. We may feel justified, then, in passing over any of his positive contributions to educational theory and confining ourselves to an evaluation of the philosophy that underlies his theory of moral education. (1)

Dewey once accused the medieval philosophers and those of nineteenth century Germany of not having gone at their task with unbiased minds. The same charge might well be brought against him. Caught up early in the spell of Hegelian philosophy and fascinated by the plausibility of the Darwinian theory of transition, Dewey has carried over into his philosophy the theory of evolution as an easy solution of intricate philosophical problems. By so doing, he has based the whole of his experimental philosophy on an unproven hypothesis of man's origin, an hypothesis which to-day is losing more and more of any real scientific prestige it may have once enjoyed. With such a prepossession, he sets out to solve the problems of philosophy, morality and education. Taking man as continuous with physical nature with

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- (1) For an analysis of Dewey's philosophy, cf. W. T. Feldman: The Philosophy of John Dewey, and A.K. Rogers: English and American Philosophy since 1800.

For an analysis of Dewey's philosophy of education, cf. Paul Henning: Die weltanschaulichen Grundlagen von John Dewey's Erziehungstheorie, and Rudolf Prantl: Dewey als Pädagog in Vierteljahrsschrift für wissenschaftliche Pädagogik, 1er Bd. Heft 2, 3, 4.

For an analysis of Dewey's educational theory, cf. J.H. O'Hara: The Limitations of the Educational Theory of John Dewey.

only varying stadia in the process of the evolution of matter to distinguish them, he denies any spiritual element in man and so reduces his philosophy to a crass form of monism. Although he has tried to weld this monism with the other tenets gathered from various schools of thought, the result has been, as it must always be with monistic philosophy, the denial of evident truth and a mass of contradictions.(2)

To deny the dualistic nature of man, for instance, is not merely to go against the common philosophical tradition from Aristotle's day to our own, but it means the denial of a truth manifest to anyone who is unbiased enough to accept the data of his own introspection and logical reasoning. The union of soul and body to form one person gives rise naturally to many involved philosophical and psychological problems but their solution is not to be hoped for in the hasty denial of a certain truth. To posit a spiritual element in man may seem to introduce something mysterious into philosophy but it is far more mysterious to try to explain man and his activities without a spiritual soul. To think that by simply seeing "the organism in nature, the nervous system in the organism, the brain in the nervous system, the cortex in the brain," we are going to solve all the intricate problems of philosophy is too naive to be taken seriously. (3) The solution, however, is typical of Dewey's method, namely, to show the problems of philosophy meaningless rather than to give a direct answer to the difficulties. (4) In this connection, Baumgarten has observed that in a youthful work on Leibnitz' attempt to reconcile various Christian religions, Dewey questioned whether the conditions under which Leibnitz pictured the unification did not point to the greatest weakness in his own philosophy,

(2) Cf. Friedrich Klimke: Monismus und Pädagogik, Ch. I

(3) Cf. *supra*, Ch. III.

(4) Cf. Feldman: *op. cit.*, Preface.

namely, the tendency to shut his eyes to the antagonisms and to smooth out all contradictions into a dead level of uniformity.(5) The same criticism could be made of Dewey's own attempt to smooth out philosophical difficulties by shutting his eyes to manifest paradoxes. An example might be taken from his solution of the epistemological problem where he tells how man comes to know the world by saying that the living human organism from being involved in a natural medium, to which it is adapted, will come to know the events and connections of this environment. That is an over-simplification of the problem of cognition and is rendered valueless by the fact that it depended on a fatal 'if', namely, "if thinking is serial with biological functions."(6) That was precisely the point that Dewey's theory of continuity was to establish and not assume without proof. Otherwise, we have a case of "ipse dixitism" which he so justly abhors.

In discussing Dewey's monism, however, there is no need to develop here the argument for the existence of the soul. The materialism of the nineteenth century, to which Dewey fell a victim, has lost much of its vogue. Psychology has become distinctly more spiritualistic and that not only in the realm of rational psychology but in the experimental laboratory as well. American thought, it is true, is still influenced by the materialistic tone of Thorndike's writings, but in Europe the dualistic trend in psychology has been more manifest. We need only recall Bühler's work in "thought psychology" or Spearman's data on a general faculty of knowledge or Lindworsky's studies of the will. As an example of the attitude of modern experimental psychology toward the existence of a spiritual element in man, we may take the statement of Wundt:

The results of my labours do not square with the materialistic hypothesis, nor with the dualism of Plato and Descartes. It is only the animism of Aristotle, joining psychology to biology, that results as a commendable

(5) Eduard Baumgarten: "John Dewey: III. Theorie der menschlichen Natur" in Internationale Zeitschrift für Erziehung. VI Jahrgang, 1937. Heft 3.
 (6) Cf. *supra*, Ch. III.

metaphysical conclusion from Experimental Psychology.(7)

Not only is Dewey's materialistic explanation of man out of date, but its special form in terms of behavioristic psychology involves a contradiction. Behaviorism intends to allow room only for observation of external behavior since that alone would merit the name of objective, while introspection would supply only subjective fiction. External behavior, however, is but one part of the science of psychology, and that part is treated in a self-contradictory way by borrowing from introspection which it is supposed to have outlawed. Language is not the same as thought. Now, when Watson takes an oral account on the basis of its content as often times the single reaction and still pretends to be using only external manifestations of human activity, he contradicts himself. Behaviorism fails to give an adequate account of psychological data. In rejecting our own experience as a certain source of knowledge, behaviorism denies, at the same time, the basis of its own study.(8)

In the past half-century that bounds roughly the teaching career of John Dewey, he has made desperate attempts to keep his thinking up to date. Darwinism, Spencerian evolutionism, the materialism of the nineteenth century with its cult of natural science, the culture-epoch theory, the relativity of Einstein, have all been made to feel at home in his expansive philosophical mind. He credits himself with having been a behaviorist before that term was commonly used in psychological literature; despite his abhorrence of fixity in any form, he would even be ready to make friends with the philosophy of values. Along with these positive phases of thought, Dewey has cherished the negations and pet aversions of the past fifty years, - the disdain for metaphysics, the rejection of faculties, the denial of transfer of training, the rationalization of religion, and so on. But he has lived long enough to

(7) Wilhelm Wundt: *Physiological Psychology*, II., c. 23, p. 633. Ed. 4, 1907.

(8) Joseph Fröbes: *Lehrbuch der Experimentellen Psychologie*, Nachtrag zu Band I, pp. 5 and 6.

see much of this thought out-moded and abandoned. That was the inevitable price to be paid for starting with a false basis for his thought in materialistic evolution and materialistic monism. The first of these two theories could not be bolstered up and rendered consistent by any number of additions from modern thinkers and modern theories. His monism has come to see the time when there is a pronounced trend toward dualism. The "vain metaphysics" which he cast aside in name, at least (for what he really did, as a positivistic empiricist, was to construct a metaphysics of his own in place of the traditional one), has come back into philosophical thought again. With the turn of the century, a new tendency is clearly discernible and the basic element in that change has been designated in German philosophy as the "Auferstehung der Metaphysik." In Germany, there was the influence of the two modern Aristotelians, Bolzano and Brentano, that has helped Edmund Husserl in the development of a metaphysics that is traditional in tone, even though it shows traces of his own phenomenology. From the neo-Kantian school, there is a metaphysician like K  lpe. (9) In France, there is a metaphysical approach to philosophy in the works of Bergson, Gilson, and Maritain. What is true of Germany and France can be duplicated in other countries in the past quarter of a century. With this return to metaphysics, we have the way paved toward objectivity, and that not only in the teaching about being but in the teaching about what ought to be, namely, in the doctrine of ethical principles and ethical values. With this turning to first principles, moral philosophy is given back its firm theoretical basis which Dewey would destroy with his denial of metaphysics and all that is

(9) Ettlinger: Die philosophischen Zusammenh  nge in der P  dagogik der jungsten Vergangenheit und Gegenwart, p. 4 ff. For a more detailed treatment, cf. Ettlinger: Geschichte der Philosophie von der Romantik bis zur Gegenwart, p. 302 ff.

implied therein with regard to absolute truths and absolute values. What is said of moral philosophy, applies especially to the allied branches of philosophy of education and political philosophy.(10) Eternal verities and unchanging standards of value are to become norms for thought and action instead of the wavering truth of pragmatism and the unstable values of utilitarian opportunism.

For moral philosophy, the denial of the spiritual element in man's dualistic nature involved the denial of reason as a faculty distinct from man's bodily organism. That entailed the consequent denial of conscience as a judgment of our reason by which we recognize the relation of our actions to the moral order. That there exists such a subjective norm for conduct is one of those truths of common experience that only a monistic bias could deny. Its existence stands out with special clearness when, after some failing in a virtue like kindness, we call ourselves to account, feel uneasy, find fault with ourselves. In such instances, we sit in judgment and bring our own selves before the tribunal of conscience to account for our violation of the moral order. In doing this, the knowledge we had of right conduct is held up as the standard and the practical judgment about the character of our action in comparison with this standard constitutes conscience. (11) In denying the existence of conscience as a judgment of our reason, Dewey reduced it to a matter of feeling and thus robbed moral conduct of its rational subjective norm, according to which we act from some rational motive and not from mere impulse or habit depending on impulse. To make conscience equivalent to feeling is to deny the primary meaning of the word itself, which certainly has reference to knowledge rather

(10) Ibid, p. 5

(11) Cathrein: Moralphilosophie. Bd. I, p. 469, and Willems: Grundfragen der Philosophie und Pädagogik. Bd. 3 - Das sittliche Leben, p. 222 ff.

than emotion. The fact that at times there arise doubts of conscience on which we reflect or take counsel before acting shows that in such cases, at least, conscience is a function of reason. If that is true in these instances, why is reason not sufficient in all instances? (12)

In carrying out its work of applying general laws of conduct to individual cases, it is true that the conscience of the young child will at times need help for its proper formation. That help and guidance is to come from parents and teachers and those who have authority over the child and have the duty of leading him in the right way. But when the child has grown mature enough to have the full use of reason, then he has the duty of recurring to his conscience to ask what is right and wrong. With this maturity of reason and the development of conscience, he is morally responsible for his actions. It is here precisely that we have one of the most important tasks in the education of youth - the development of a correct conscience. (13) If that is fashioned properly and the necessary motives made clear to the child for his acting in a certain way along with the development of strength of character that will insure following the dictates of conscience, then education will have fulfilled its gravest obligation to society and provided a guarantee, as far as that is possible with human freedom, for a morally upright generation. That the school has this duty of forming character, Dewey well remarks, is a commonplace, but, in denying the existence of conscience in the proper sense of the word, he denies one of the essential elements in all character formation. If there are no practical judgments of our reason with regard to moral conduct, or in other

(12) Cathrein: Op. cit. Bd. I, p. 470

(13) Willems: Op. cit. Bd. III, pp. 222 ff.

words, if there is no conscience, where shall the child find the motives which a rational being demands for moving his will? And, if the will is not trained to follow the dictates of an enlightened conscience, it is idle for Dewey to talk of a good character. As Foerster points out, intellectual development becomes an absolute danger where it has not been subordinated to the development of conscience and the strengthening of will.(14)

It follows logically from Dewey's positivism and his acceptance of the theory of evolution that he should deny conscience in its real meaning and reduce it to a matter of feeling. According to these two philosophies, conscience and the moral order itself have developed with time, conscience fashioning itself on a framework of social relations alongside the customs and morals of the community. We can admit the importance of these factors in forming conscience but they are none the less subordinate to the main factor which is the moral order itself. The chief error, therefore, in Dewey's empirical theory of conscience is the denial of necessary, unchanging moral laws which are promulgated in man with his coming to the use of reason and applied to particular cases of conduct through his conscience. These moral laws manifested by conscience are binding on more than merely the individual as would be the case if such laws were only demands made on us by our feelings. As truths revealed by reason, such laws are universally valid and in their essence unchanging. It is only through the objective character of unchanging moral laws, as distinct from subjective feeling, that the standards of moral conduct can exert a formative and ennobling force in the life of the individual and of society. Only by taking morality in this sense, are we able to make it matter for a true science.

Now, in denying metaphysical, eternal truths, Dewey would not admit either the eternal law as something absolute and unchanging nor the

(14) Fr. Wilhelm Foerster: Schule und Charakter, pp. 3 and 4

imprint of this eternal law on the heart of man, which we designate as the natural law. The eternal law, as an expression of the will of God, is the first and supreme rule of conduct; but in our conscience, as the reflection of God's will, we have another norm for conduct. Both of these norms coincide inasmuch as the eternal law is an expression of God's essence, the supreme truth, wisdom and goodness, and man tends naturally to seek out the evidence of this divine wisdom within the created order in the universe and to execute the divine purpose implanted there. By reducing God to a mere relation of the ideal and actual and so making Him something less than an intelligent person, Dewey would effectually eliminate the eternal law as a norm of morality along with the intelligent Being that framed it. By denying the existence of conscience, he does away with the second norm. There is, therefore, a subjective norm for conduct in our conscience as well as an objective norm. Had Dewey maintained that morality requires something more than a subjective norm, we would agree with him; but he goes too far in holding that morals are purely objective. (15)

Now what does Dewey set up as his objective norm for moral conduct? Obviously it cannot be a single norm, since he does not believe that it is for ethics "to discover some final end or good or some ultimate and supreme law." (16) Besides, in taking every moral situation as unique with its own irreplaceable good, there must be a plurality of changing ends and goods. Each case of moral conduct will be settled on its own merits without appeal to a universal norm. Dewey postulates, therefore, not one objective norm of conduct but several. At one time, custom is to be the rule: "Customs in any case constitute moral standards." (17) Again, our likes and enjoyments

(15) Cf. Willems; op. cit., p. 225 and Cathrein: op. cit., p. 476 and Mausbach: "Moral" in the Lexikon der Pädagogik, Vol. III, c. 738

(16) Reconstruction in Philosophy, p. 161

(17) Human Nature and Conduct, p. 75

are to furnish a norm of conduct, for whatever decides the formation of our "judgments about that which should regulate the formation of our desires, affections and enjoyments" will determine the main course of conduct. (18) Another norm proposed is the present activity itself without relation to anything beyond it, since modern life "would find within its own interests and activities the authoritative guidance for its own affairs." (19) Still another rule of conduct is to be found in experience which "will itself provide the values, meanings and standards now sought in some transcendent world." (20) Finally, we are to seek this norm of conduct in the social quality of our actions, for "we reach the conclusion that Right, law, duty, arise from the relations which human beings intimately sustain to one another, and that their authoritative force springs from the very nature of the relation that binds people together." (21) This social norm involves as a corollary the idea of approbation first of the social group itself and then of an ideal spectator through whose eyes we view our conduct. An act, therefore, is moral if it is approvable and will conduce to the well-being of the social group.

From among these various norms of conduct that Dewey proposes, let us select two for special consideration - experience and the social quality of conduct. As to the first, we have seen that experience is basic in Dewey's whole philosophy, even though we would not admit the meaning that he gives the term as something that can be described without reference to a self who has the experience. It is interesting to note in this connection the comment of Leroux.

(18) The Quest for Certainty, p. 265

(19) Ibid., p. 313

(20) Ibid., p. 78

(21) Dewey and Tufts: Ethics. (rev. edit.) p. 237

Le pragmatisme radical de Chicago n'échappe verbalement au solipsisme qu'en se refusant à établir entre l'expérience individuelle et la réalité totale une distinction que toute pensée humaine paraît impliquer. (22)

But taking experience, even in the objective sense that Dewey gives it, could it suffice as a norm for moral conduct? It could, of course, only on condition that we understand by norm something flexible. That, however, is not its ordinary meaning. A norm is equivalent to a measure and a shifting measure is worthless. Now, experience is for Dewey something that can change, since education which is a moral activity "is that reconstruction or reorganization of experience which adds to the meaning of experience, and which increases ability to direct the course of subsequent experience." (23) If experience, therefore, is something that can be changed, it is difficult to see how we are to use it to form a system of ethics. Yet Dewey has at one time held that ethical theory is a systematic judgment of value. (24) But how are we to form a systematic judgment of value with a standard that refuses to remain fixed?

The attempt to make shifting human experience the norm for moral theory is allied to Dewey's pragmatic view of truth as of something changing with the course of time. Such flexible elements as unstable experience and changing truth can never be the basis of a real science of ethics, for the great majority of scientists as well as the moral philosophers would not admit Dewey's contention that science is nothing more than a system of hypotheses. If, therefore, the existence of moral ideas and moral principles that are valid for all time is denied, there is nothing on which to base a true moral science. (25)

(22) Emmanuel Leroux: Le Pragmatisme Américain et Anglais, p. 309

(23) Democracy and Education, p. 89

(24) Syllabus - Ethical Theory, p. 1

(25) Cathrein; Religion and Moral, p. 90

The sources of ethical science must also be looked for in unchanging metaphysical truth and not, as Dewey thinks, in the experiential data of natural science. The day that he visions, when the natural sciences will be included as an integral part of moral science, will never come. Moral laws can never be deduced from factual science, whether it be biology, psychology or sociology. The reason is that ethical science does not treat merely of what is but of what ought to be, and this is not a matter of experiential data from the natural sciences. (26) This does not mean that psychology, for example, cannot be of service to ethics in the study of such problems as the relation of the emotions to moral life or the freedom of the will as basic to all morality. It does mean, however, that psychology can never furnish, as Dewey holds, norms for moral conduct. What is said here of ethics in relation to factual sciences is equally true of education which, as a moral activity, cannot find its final end or purpose in any factual science such as psychology but only in an ethics based on metaphysics. (27) The assertion of Dewey, therefore, that education, as a reconstruction of experience, is its own end is meaningless, and implies a denial of the moral character of educational activity. (28)

In making the social value of our actions the measure of their moral value, Dewey is only following in the foot-steps of Comte and Spencer. His attempt to fashion a system of ethics would lean more to the social sciences as with Comte than to the biological as with Spencer. From a historical study of the development of an ethical idea or moral practice, Dewey thought to gain an insight into the operations and conditions that make morality, and so acquire the tools needed to attack other moral problems, since we

(26) Ettlenger: Die philosophischen Zusammenhänge, etc. p. 17

(27) Ibid.

(28) Democracy and Education, p. 60

are supposed to be still forming new norms and new ends for conduct. By placing the belief in the validity of some moral idea in relation to the circumstances generating it and to the effects following from it, we are to come "out of the region of mere opinion, sentimentality, and prejudice." (29) Ethics, then, must either adopt this historico-genetic method of evolutionary science or never become scientific. By linking up the evolutionary method of Spenser with the altruistic positivism of Comte, Dewey would find a norm for conduct in the good of society. What benefits society, therefore, is morally good and what harms society is morally evil. Man, since he is regarded by Dewey as having no existence save as a member of society, is thus reduced to a mere instrument to serve the common good. His own worth and dignity as an individual is disregarded.

Making the good of society the norm for moral conduct leads us to another difficulty. If the individual's striving for his own good is not to be counted moral, why should striving for the good of the community be moral, since the well-being of society would include along with the common good that of its individual members? The only justification there can be for demanding of the individual that he sacrifice his own good to the common good of society would come from the fact that society is not merely a group of similar individuals, but that it possesses a real moral unity with a common aim toward which all the members are to strive. Such a unity would presuppose an intelligent Being superior to mankind who directs all individuals toward the same goal and according to the same laws. Such an intelligent, personal God, Dewey would not admit.

Now, if we admit the existence of such a Supreme Being, as creator, and ruler. and final end of all things, then it follows that the first obligation of man would be to reverence, love and serve Him above every-

(29) "Evolutionary Method and Morality" in the Philosophical Review, Vol. XI, No. 4, p. 363.

thing else. Such a service would be given for His own sake and independently of any good that might accrue to society. While this carrying out of one's obligations to God would be of benefit to society, its morality would not depend on its social utility. Presupposing a belief in a Supreme Being, therefore, man has other obligations besides those to society. His chief duty is to do God's will and to work out his own salvation. These moral obligations, which likewise effect the best interests of the individual, are never to be subordinated to the good of the community nor is man to become a mere means of progress for society. He must be regarded not only as a member of the social group but as a person; as such, he is in a certain sense his own end.

A theistic ethics would also demand of the individual self-denial, which Dewey rejects as a perversion of the truth and as something unnatural.⁽³⁰⁾ Without the motivation supplied by a theistic ethics and without the prospect of a supernatural reward, his social ethics demand not merely self-denial but self-annihilation for the sake of society. Apart from the community, toward which all his efforts are to be directed, the individual is to count for nothing, and yet he has been given nothing but a natural motive for such a supreme sacrifice.

Besides this fundamental difficulty with a social norm, the question would arise, how are we to determine the common good of society which Dewey describes as "the stable and expanding institution of all things that make life worth while throughout all human relationships."⁽³¹⁾ Now, who is to determine what makes life worth while? Certainly, not all people find their interest and enjoyment in the same things, and yet why should I have to give up what I judge worth while in order to pursue aims determined for me by another as something worth while? What would make the judgment

(30) Cf. *Supra*, Ch. IX.

(31) *The Quest for Certainty*, p. 31

of another superior to my own, and why should I be forced to submit to it? Besides, it is clear that there are things that are really worth while and those that are only apparently so. To be certain that we have hit on something really worth while for society, there is need of a higher and more definite moral standard than the good of society. (32) In postulating things that make life worth while, Dewey is involved in the constantly recurring inconsistency of denying metaphysics with its absolute truths and absolute values, and yet holding that there are things absolutely worth while. But by the time he came to write the Quest for Certainty, Dewey, whether he wants to admit or not, was evidently not nearly so convinced that metaphysics was, after all, so vain and idle, or that we could get along with an ethics based on relative values.

In our consideration of Dewey's social norm for moral conduct, we have touched on the most fundamental error in his whole theory of ethics, - the denial of a personal God. In seeking the main source of morality in man's autonomous nature and its norm in the good of human society, Dewey was seeking the final cause of morality where it can never be found, namely, in humanity. But man does not exist of himself or for himself alone, but depends for his existence on a Supreme Being. Human nature, therefore, cannot be a final reason for the moral law, since it has in itself no final reason for existing. Morality must look, then, for its source and its norm in something beyond and above man, to which man is ordained as to his last end, that is to God. (33) In denying the existence of a personal God, Dewey has destroyed the only firm basis for a system of ethics. Without God, there is no sufficient reason for man's existence; outside of God, man has no final end, since there is nothing created that can satisfy man's longings for happiness.

(32) Cf. Cathrein: Moralphilosophie, Bd. I, pp. 284 ff.

(33) Cf. Klimke: Monismus und Pädagogik, p. 228

St. Thomas, as Grabmann points out, even though he is treating ethics in his *Summa* from the standpoint of a philosopher rather than a theologian, regarded the whole of morality as the movement of the rational creature toward God (*motus rationalis creaturae ad Deum*). It is only in God as the terminus of this movement that the creature will find complete happiness in the perfect possession and love of God, an end which is to be attained not in this world but in the next. Now, just as God is man's final end, so too, through his law, He gives man a norm and a sanction for moral conduct. Besides, God adds the help of grace to give man's conduct its direction toward and proportion to his final end. But God leaves man free to follow that law or not, thus making his freedom of will a subjective precondition for all moral conduct. Taking these moral actions objectively, they will be termed good or evil according as they have the degree of perfection that God demands for them. The final standard for measuring this perfection of man's actions lies in God himself as the exemplar and cause of all created good.(34)

In this brief sketch of scholastic moral teaching, three concepts stand out as fundamental, namely, God, freedom of the will, and immortality. With regard to each of the three, Dewey's theory of morality has erred. Denying a personal God, he has tried to construct a secular ethics based on human nature with the good of human society for its final norm. The difficulties involved in these views, we have seen.

As regards freedom of the will, Dewey has kept the term 'freedom' but has given it a meaning of his own which does not correspond to the ordinary meaning of freedom, nor to the freedom required in order to make conduct truly moral.(35) It is not surprising that he would have to give up the real concept of freedom of the will, since that could not logically be retained in an atheistic

(34) Grabmann: Geschichte der Philosophie - Die Philosophie des Mittelalters, pp. 103, 104.

(35) Cf. *supra*, Ch. VI.

ethics. Freedom is not a gift to man from nature in process of evolution, for nature itself does not possess freedom and so cannot hand it on to man. It is only God who can bestow freedom on man.(36) The importance of freedom of will for the moral life and of a correct understanding of it for moral theory is obvious. Without freedom, there is no question of moral responsibility, nor of the practice of virtue, nor of character formation. It is interesting that Dewey, who professes to make so much of scientific method in the study of moral theory, appears to be quite ignorant of the recent experimental studies of the will by such psychologists as Ach and Lindworsky. Modern research would have shown his own views on the will both unscientific and unphilosophical.

As for immortality, Dewey's monistic philosophy cannot logically leave room for immortality of the soul, since it does not believe in the existence of a spiritual element in man that will survive after the death of the body. But how important personal immortality is for moral theory is clear from the fact that, without it, there can be found no sufficient reason for man's efforts to lead a virtuous life which God demands of him, even at the cost of life itself. In Dewey's theory, the individual must be ready to sacrifice his life for the good of society and that with no hope of immortality. He thus becomes a mere means to realize a social purpose. This is directly opposed to the whole idea of personality which, in its own right, is a distinct value and cannot be simply a means to some other end. Connected with the idea of immortality is the sanction of an eternity of happiness or pain as one of the surest means to secure steadfastness in good and conversion from evil doing. This powerful sanction is cast aside with Dewey's denial of immortality. His charge that, by keeping the thought of another world before

(36) Willems: op. cit., Bd. III, -p. 307

his mind, a man is less competent to understand this present world is far from true. It is only in the light of another world that many of the problems of this life find their solution. Finally, it is in the next life that we look for the further development of the moral life begun in this one.

All the problems of moral science, therefore; - the end of man, his duties, good and evil, norms of morality, duty and law, reward and punishment, moral motives - will all find their satisfactory answer only on condition that the immortality of the soul is presupposed. But without God, without personal immortality, with no reward to be looked for in another life, man is not essentially different from the brute. The result is that there is no longer any question of a moral order that deserves the name.(37)

Once the existence of a personal God is admitted, there follows of necessity the obligation on man's part of paying Him reverence and service. These obligations are fulfilled in part through the practice of religion which holds, therefore, a primary and essential place among man's moral obligations. If we include, also, in our concept of 'religion' the body of truths concerning man's relations to a Supreme Being, then religion becomes not only a part of the moral order but its indispensable foundation. With God as the final end of all things, all creatures are bound to give Him glory but man especially through his observance of the moral order. If, then this moral order is torn loose from God, its proper orientation is lost and man is turned away from his final end. (38)

How far Dewey's idea of religion which he describes as a "sense of the whole" - whatever that may mean, - with its symbol in the life of the community and its ritual in social acts, falls short of the true meaning of

(37) Cathrein: Moralphilosophie, Bd.II, p. 7.

(38) Cathrein: Moralphilosophie, Bd. II, p. 14 ff.

religion is only too clear. A religion that worships humanity has no place for God and, without a personal God, we have religion in name only and not in fact. Without an eternal God to give binding force to the obligations manifested through conscience, there is no question of a lasting observance of the moral law from a purely natural or humanitarian motive. These are not powerful enough, in the face of his own selfishness, passion and pride, to hold man to the path of righteousness. Without a divine religion and its supernatural sanctions of an eternity of happiness or pain (which Dewey calls "superstition"), the only solid foundation of morality is destroyed. There is no sufficient means left to check the gradual but inevitable moral collapse of the family, the state and human society.

Dewey, however, turned from God and religion to human intelligence aided by the methods of natural science in search of a new basis for morality. His attempt has been unsuccessful as those before him have been and as all must be as long as God is God. He has joined the number of those philosophers to whom the late Holy Father referred as attempting to find a new basis and a universal code of morality, as if there were no decalogue or Gospel or natural law engraven on the heart of man, promulgated by human reason, and set as a part of God's positive revelation in the Ten Commandments. (39) When God and religion are taken out of the moral order and out of the lives of individuals, we destroy the foundation of morality for the family and state, two social communities for which Dewey's social morality would be expected to have special regard. Without reverence and respect for God, we cannot expect reverence and obedience for parental authority or for civil and national authority, since they all have a common source for their

(39) Encyclical of Pius XI on the Christian Education of Youth, p. 21

authority in God. Obedience to them includes obedience to God.

This problem of authority has turned up time and again to haunt Dewey's philosophy but never to be solved. He, even, goes so far as to say that the "problem of union of freedom and authority is insoluble as well as unsolved." (40) The reason is that he starts with a false concept of authority as the stability of social organization from which direction and support are given to individuals. His concept of individual freedom is equally inadequate, since it stands merely for the forces by which change is intentionally brought about. But a more basic reason for never coming to a proper understanding of authority is that in denying a personal God, Dewey has denied the source of all authority, both human and divine. The human society he dreams of is to know nothing of the God of revelation but is to worship at the shrine of a vague humanitarianism. Without an altar and without a God, this society lays heavy demands on human beings with a show of authority which it cannot itself give an account of. Too liberal to believe in orthodox Christianity and too reactionary to shake himself free of the prepossessions of the New England orthodoxy of his youth, John Dewey has never come to a correct idea of either the individual or of his relation to authority, whether that be in the State or in the Church. Convinced that the exaggerated individualism born of Luther's revolt from authority can explain the values the modern mind puts on human personality, Dewey, by some strange paradox, rejects all organized religions and yet clings to the basic Protestant doctrine of the right to self-determination on the part of the individual. Casting aside the traditions of philosophy, of morality, and of education, he clings to this one principle of Protestant orthodoxy, and we might well call him the Great American Dissenter. He

(40) "Authority and Social Change" in Authority and the Individual. A Harvard Tercentenary Publication, 1937. p. 179.

shares the hopes of the English dissenters in looking for a secular state that will speak only one language, a political language, without a word of religion; he shares their ambition for the individual that he may prepare for a new heaven on earth, - the drab, industrial state of nature. (41)

With regard to the experimental method of natural science that Dewey would employ in his search for a new foundation for morality, it is hard to take too seriously his recommendation that moral truth be subjected to an empirical method of appraisal, when he admits candidly that he is uncertain of the applicability of the so-called scientific method to moral problems. The idea of experimenting with moral truths on which rests the good not only of the individual but of the family and the whole of society reveals an appalling recklessness in dealing with some of life's most sacred values.

When Dewey comes to apply his moral theory to the problems of education, the limitations involved in constructing a program of moral education on the narrow basis of a naturalistic and social morality are manifest. Although we may speak of social morality and social obligations, we have not thereby summed up the whole of morality, for moral conduct remains ultimately an individual as well as a social obligation. It is the individual who is responsible for his conduct, and he cannot unburden himself of his personal obligations to the moral order by appealing to a social mind or a social consciousness. Individual responsibility follows from the fact that there must be knowledge of the moral obligation in order to hold one responsible. This knowledge comes through the individual intellect, despite the fact that Dewey, without offering proof, denies the existence of separate minds and postulates a social mind instead. As it is the individual who knows his moral obligations, so too, it is the individual who must be trained to live

(41) Cf. passim: Anthony Lincoln: Some Political and Social Ideas of English Dissent 1763-1800.

his own life first and to fulfill his own personal obligations. These obligations will include duties to his fellow-man and to society, but his prior obligation is to himself. He is an individual first of all and then a social being. Both of these phases of man's dual nature must be given consideration in a complete theory of education which Dewey does not do when he takes the individual as having neither life nor purpose in life, apart from society. Education, therefore, must first form the individual for his own sake, transforming him into a personality with a trained mind, a firm character, spiritual depth, capable of understanding the world, his own place in the world, and his relations to it, to himself, to his fellow-men, and to God. Taking the child as a social being, education has the task of striving to incorporate him into the various social units, - into the family, first of all, and through the family into the larger societies of Church and State.

Just as a confusion of morality with sociality was characteristic of Dewey's moral theory, so the neglect of the individual nature of the child vitiates his educational theory. In his writings, of course, there is much that deals with the individual child, where he is taken as the center of the school's program, class-room procedure, and school government. But that regard for individuality is confined to didactic technique and school administration. In the underlying philosophy of his educational program, Dewey takes the child simply and solely as a unit of society without any regard for his individual destiny that transcends the whole of human society. That destiny will never be realized, if the personality of the individual child is made a mere means of social progress. An important part of human life is led apart from the turmoil of economic and social life within the inner world of one's own personality. For this phase of life, we need more than the narrow, utilitarian program of studies and the activistic methods provided in Dewey's theory. To nourish this inner personal life, there is need of

a more broadly cultural program of studies combined with the scientific and vocational curriculum of Dewey's school. There is need of a more thorough mastery of all the school subjects than is possible with a method that caters too exclusively to the child's whims and neglects the formative discipline of work that is assigned not merely because the child likes it but because of its intrinsic value. In taking work as the bond of society and then transferring it into the school to be the coordinating principle of the entire program of studies, Dewey has taken a narrow view of what life holds and has impoverished the spiritual growth of the child. In his criticism of the Active School, Nohl remarks that the nineteenth century and especially the positivistic philosophers thought to find the meaning of life in work. But to-day, even though we acknowledge the social importance of work, it is clear that life needs more than toil to make it complete and satisfying. The cult of work in the active school brings with it the danger of developing the nervous, active, impatient type of pupil through relating everything to the immediate aim of the task at hand and neglecting the theoretical understanding of the problem. (42)

However valuable the principle of activity may be in the classroom, it has very definite limitations to its usefulness. To think, as Dewey does, that the active program and the social regime of the modern progressive school is going to supply all that is required for moral education implies a narrow view of morality and the realities of life. The possibilities offered by the school for the practice of the social virtues of helpfulness and self-sacrifice do not by any means bring into action all the virtues that will be required in later life. Much of the moral struggle is going to take

(42) Nohl and Pallat: Handbuch der Pädagogik, Bd. I, p. 334

place away from society within the depths of the individual soul. There is need, then, of an inner strength and courage that has been acquired through self-discipline and self-mastery, neither one of which will be provided in a school that fosters to excess the self-expression of the child at the expense of a proper self-repression. Combined with development of initiative on the part of the child, there will always be need of the virtue of obedience to those in authority, a virtue which is, as Dewey might have suspected, fundamental in the whole of social life. Yet, the active school minimizes the authority of the teacher and fosters an extreme of self-autonomy on the part of the pupil. In any case, Dewey's denial of a personal God does away with the only source of authority to which the teacher could lay claim. Without a theistic philosophy of life, the authority of the teacher is reduced to a mere display of arbitrary rule.

That the school should be a replica of society, is a dictum which Dewey never wearies of repeating, for he holds that the moral training secured by living a social life within the class-room will equip the child sufficiently to lead a moral life outside the school and to aid in the making of a better society. Now, is the school really a replica of actual life outside? In the opinion of Alois Fischer, despite the beauty of the idea of educating through actual life, it is little adopted for the educational process. While we must adapt our teaching to the psychology of childhood, yet children are by no means always attentive to the actualities of life and grow up quite oblivious at times to much that is transpiring about them. They are not yet prepared for grappling with actual situations in life and, instead of being thrown into the midst of it, they need to be protected from it so that they may come out later from the paradise of childish innocence into the world of actual life. (43) The school is and will always be an artificial

(43) Alois Fischer: Arbeits- und Erlebnispädagogik. In Bücherei der Quelle, Heft 51, 1932, Heft 1, 2, 4, 5

society. That we can see by comparing it with life in the home, or the relation of teacher and child to that of parent and child. To believe, then, that by attending school, the child has been exposed to the actualities of everyday life or that life in the social atmosphere of the school, with no further training in morality or religion, will supply an adequate moral education is quite false. There will be need of a more definite and complete moral education than that supplied by the casual and informal instruction and guidance of the class-room. Dewey's attitude toward moral instruction and his rejection of examples as a source of inspiration for moral conduct cannot be defended, if we are to have a complete moral education. His disregard for the value of models of conduct indicates a lack of insight into the psychology of youth, especially of the adolescent, who is given to hero worship and so deeply influenced by the ideal characters selected from sacred and profane history. The power of the example of the Son of God is lost on a school from which religion, as Dewey would have it, is unconditionally excluded. (44)

With Dewey's attitude toward religion in the school, we come to the fundamental weakness in his whole theory of moral education, namely, the lack of the only solid foundation for morality in a supernatural religion. Modern philosophy has been described by Erdmann as a philosophical Protestantism. That may be well illustrated in the case of John Dewey. Just as Protestantism turned from reason enlightened by faith to the irrational factor in emotion, so Dewey turned from the rational guidance of conscience to the irrational elements in his trilogy of instinct, impulse, and habit. Religion for him is not a matter of supernatural revelation but a product of the human mind

(44) "Religion and Our Schools" in op. cit. p. 509 and 513.

which the pragmatist is free to use or reject as he thinks his needs require. With James, religion was something to be pragmatically altered; with Dewey, something to be pragmatically rejected. To the Protestant view of the sufficiency of human reason in interpreting Scripture, Dewey adds self-sufficiency in moral guidance without the need of God or a divine law. We have a return to the pagan idea of making man the measure of all things and Dewey's version of it takes the form of a moral theory in which self-realization is to be the moral ideal.

Disastrous as the denial of God and a God-given code of morality is for all moral life, its effect on the life within the school has been especially devastating. A purely psychological analysis of the interests of childhood would reveal the religious interest to be one of the deepest. Now, according to Newlon, Dewey is supposed to have fastened attention on the nature and needs of the child and yet, with startling inconsistency, he banishes religion from the school. In doing that, he leaves one of the dominating interests of the child unprovided for and fails to meet the real need the child has of the single motivating power equal to all the moral demands of life. (45) Without religion, then, the program of the school is not only incomplete, but from its lack, the child gains or can gain, at least, the impression that religion is a very minor affair in comparison with the other interests provided for by the school. Not only will the individual child lack the religious formation required for a deep, inner personal transformation, but society too, is going to suffer. It is from religion alone that inspiration and strength will flow for that whole-hearted self-sacrifice and thoughtful service of humanity,

(45) "John Dewey's Influence in the Schools" in John Dewey - The Man and his Philosophy.

on which Dewey puts such stress. (46)

In concluding this study of John Dewey's moral theory and its relation to education, it is interesting to note that, in the very recent past, critical voices have been raised to challenge his views that have been so long a powerful influence in American educational thought. There has been the group of 'essentialists' opposed to the pedagogical practices deduced from his educational philosophy. There has been the defense of a more liberal type of education by such men as President Hutchins of the University of Chicago directly counter to Dewey's narrow utilitarian program. This rising storm has not escaped his notice and one of his most recent educational writings has assumed a distinctly apologetic tone when he attacks, for instance, the "reactionary return to intellectual and moral authoritarianism." In answer to the argument which he repeats:

It is argued that science and its method must be subordinated; that we must return to the logic of ultimate first principles expressed in the logic of Aristotle and St. Thomas, in order that the young may have sure anchorage in their intellectual and moral life, and not be at the mercy of every passing breeze that blows, (47)

Dewey has nothing more to offer by way of reply than his old appeal that we explore and use the "potentialities inherent in experience." Time has been given these many years past to carry out his injunction and, if we may judge by the reports of public school investigations, experience has failed to provide the norm required by both private and social morality.

The educational theory of John Dewey has been hailed by Kilpatrick as the "most significant living philosophy of education." Significant it has been, no doubt, but not living, in any real sense of

(46) Cf. the criticism of the lack of religion in De Hovre-Jordan: Philosophy and Education, p. 115

(47) Experience and Education, p. 107

having provided an undying source of light and inspiration for teachers and their pupils. It has sought life where it was not to be found and has turned its back on the only true source of life, who proclaimed himself the Way, the Truth and the Life.

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Biography — Martin Smith.

Born December 9, 1891 in Hornell, New York, U.S.A.

From the 5th to the 12th year, attended the elementary school and St. Ann's Parochial School in Hornell, N.Y.

From the 12th to the 16th year, made the classical course of studies in the Hornell High School. Graduated in 1908.

Postgraduate course in Hornell High School. 1908 – 1909.

Business career, Hornell, N.Y. 1909—1916.

Freshman year of college at Canisius College, Buffalo, N.Y. 1916—1917.

Entered the Society of Jesus in September, 1917 at St. Andrew-on-Hudson, Poughkeepsie, N.Y.

Novitiate at St. Andrew-on-Hudson. 1917—1919.

Classical studies and history at St. Andrew-on-Hudson. 1919 – 1921.

Philosophical and scientific studies at Weston College, Weston, Mass. and at Woodstock College, Woodstock, Maryland. 1921—1924. During these studies, received the degrees of A.B. and M.A.

Professor in the college department of Georgetown University, Washington, D.C. 1924—1926.

Theological studies at Woodstock College, Woodstock, Maryland. 1926—1930. Ordained priest in 1929.

House official and professor in the Novitiate of St. Isaac Jogues, Wernersville, Penna. 1930—1931.

Theological studies completed at St. Andrä im Lavanttal, Kärnten, Oesterreich. 1931—1932.

Attended the University of Munich 1932—1934. During that time, I attended lectures given by the following professors: — Aloys Fischer, Geyser, Pinder, Benjamin, Pauli, Zellinger, Wenzl, Hönigswald, Albert Rehm, Kurt Schneider.

Professor of education at Fordham University, New York City, U.S.A. 1934—1936.

Returned to Munich for promotion to Doctorate in Philosophy in June, 1936.

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